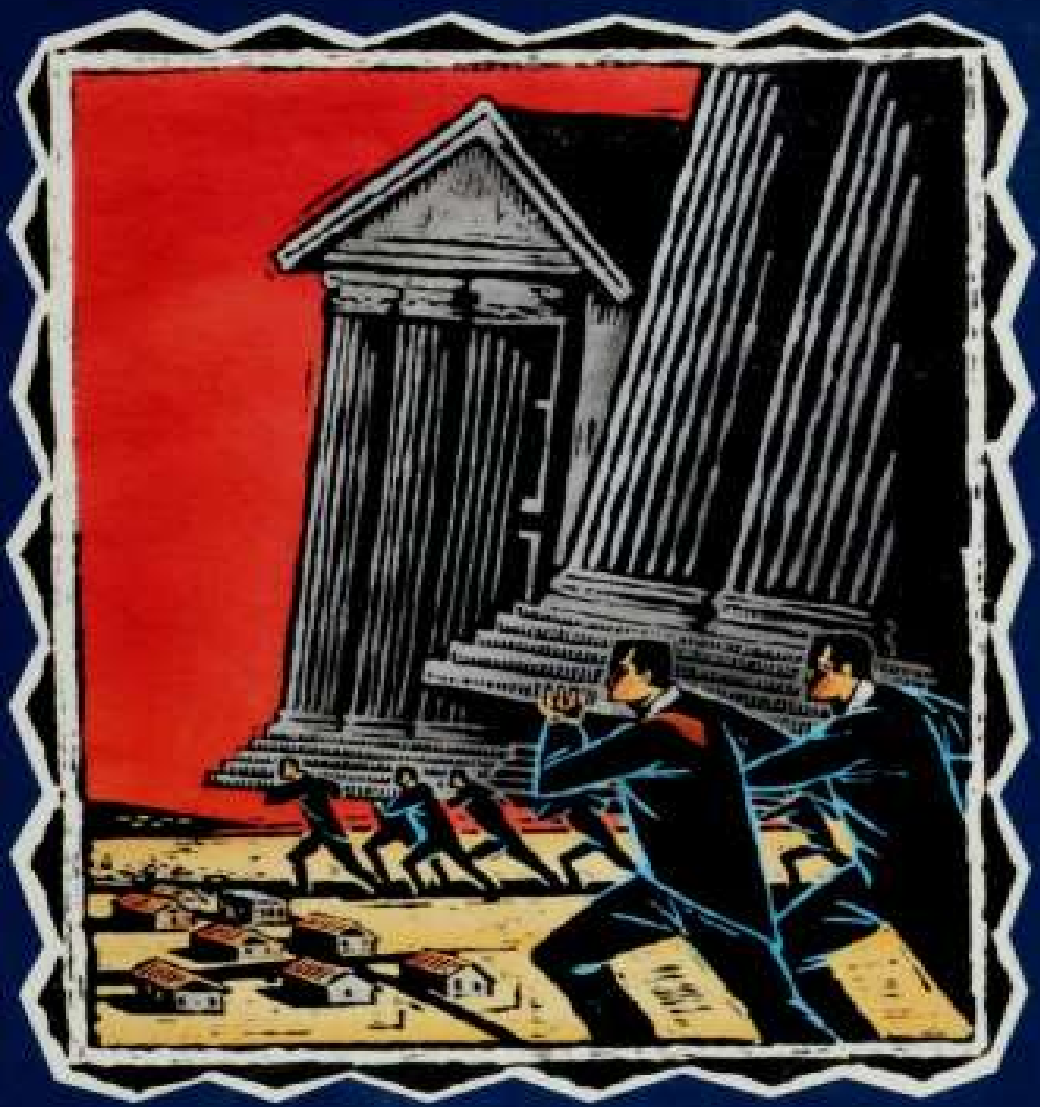
LAND of IDOLS



Political Mythology in America

MICHAEL PARENTI

Land of Idols

Political Mythology in America

Michael Parenti

St. Martin's Press
New York

Senior editor: Don Reisman
Manager, publishing services: Emily Berleth
Project management: Omega Publishing Services, Inc.
Art director: Sheree Goodman
Cover design: Jeanette Jacobs Design
Cover art: Neil Shigley

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 92-62737
Copyright © 1994 by St. Martin's Press, Inc.
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, except as may be expressly permitted by the applicable copyright statutes or in writing by the Publisher.
Manufactured in the United States of America.
87654
fedc

For information, write:
St. Martin's Press, Inc.
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010

Paper ISBN: 0-312-09497-3
Cloth ISBN: 0-312-09841-3

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for.

In memory of Rudy Lozano, Manuel De Dios, and Danny Casolaro

Their land is also full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures. Their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots. Their land also is full of idols.

Isaiah, 2:7,8

These idols are not just crude images, such as the mental picture of God as an old gentleman on a golden throne, they are our beliefs, our cherished preconceptions of the truth, which block the unreserved opening of mind and heart to reality.

Alan Watts, The Wisdom of Insecurity

The demand to abandon illusions about our condition is a demand to abandon the conditions which require illusion.

Karl Marx

Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2010

http://www.archive.org/details/landofidolspolitOOpare

Preface

One of the persistent ideological teachings in the United States is that our society is notably free of ideological teachings. Ideology supposedly is something imported from alien lands, as with "Soviet ideology." Likewise, myths are something that ancient or primitive peoples believe in, as in "ancient Greek mythology," and are not to be found in our modern secular society. True, we Americans have our beliefs about patriotism, religion, the undeserving poor, and the self-made rich. We reject as "conspiracy theorists" and "Marxist" people who see powerful interests running most of this country. And we seem sure that Marxism is a false or irrelevant "doctrine," although many of us are not sure what it is. We also have ideas

about class, race, and gender relations and about the diverse and democratic distribution of power in our "pluralistic" society. All these conventional American beliefs are not seen as myths or ideology but as legitimate understandings of the real world.

In this book I argue that such beliefs are themselves myths and ideologies and that our political culture is riddled with mythologies that serve conservative class interests and keep us from fully pursuing our democratic interests. These mythologies are widely disseminated and remain largely free of critical examination. Some of them are developed into well-articulated ideologies—although never called that—and are consciously propagated by political leaders, media pundits, academics, and others. They offer justifications for capitalism, the free market, U.S. global interventionism, and attacks on alternative ideologies and systems.

The most insidious forms of ideology are those that are not identified as ideology but are seen as the natural order of things. They do not emerge spontaneously and full-blown, but are disseminated through the dominant institutions of society, serving as instruments of social control. In contrast, dissident and iconoclastic views, such as found in this book, are accorded only Hmited exposure or are sometimes subjected to outright suppression.

This book is divided into three sections. Part One (chapters 1 through 4) deals with myths that encourage political acquiescence to existing power relations in society. These include a number of notions not usually thought of as political per se, as found in New Age ideology, religiosity, and superpatriotism.

Part Two tries to correct the confusions around the concept of "class" prevalent in both mainstream social science and sectors of the left (chapter 5). In violation of the orthodoxy that exists across most of the political spectrum, chapter 6 introduces the reader to the continuing relevance of Marxism. Chapter 7 treats culture as something more than just an innocent accretion and shows the links between dominant politico-cultural views and the structural interests that support, and are supported by, them. Chapter 8 offers a critical treatment of class myths and biases.

In the final section of the book, chapters 9 and 10 treat the historic origins of racism, its functions for capitalism, and the relation of racism to class reality. Chapter 11 attempts the same with the victimization of women, emphasizing the sometimes neglected economic realities and functions of sexism and male oppression. The closing chapter treats the ever-persistent question of conspiracy and intent. Are critical perspectives of U.S. society nothing more than paranoid imaginings, or are they representative of reality? Is it true that, unlike the rest of us, the rich and powerful do not act with conscious intent?

Some academicians believe that before you say what is on your mind, you must give account of what is on everyone else's mind. This is demanded especially of those who take a position critical of the conventional wisdom. While I do give some attention to the mainstream literature, I spend most of my time developing often neglected and misrepresented dissident views. That is the purpose of this book.

This book tries to act as a catalyst to critical thought and does not pretend to be exhaustive in its treatment of the literature or in its presentation of data. Much of the evidence supporting the arguments herein has been developed in earlier works of mine—to which I frequently refer the reader, rather than having to duplicate previous efforts. Still, I believe this book can and should be read as an independent work, one that offers its own range of critical ideas and evidence regarding political mythology in the United States. Rather than being a rigorous, tightly composed social science monograph, it is a discursive series of essays linked by some basic underlying themes, designed to get students and lay readers thinking about the unthinkable.

In the struggle for social justice and democracy, we must traverse a land of idols. The idols have been fashioned by those who would have us worship at an altar of their own making. I believe such worship is not a suitable vocation for a democratic people. The goal of this book is to divest ourselves of the myths that limit our understanding of political reality and undermine democratic viability. The hope is that the reader comes away with a more critical perspective of the idols of political orthodoxy and a more determined commitment to the substance as well as the forms of democracy.

Michael Parenti Berkeley, California

Acknowledgments

Sally Soriano and Peggy Noton rendered much valuable assistance in researching and critiquing this book. Useful reference materials were provided by Helen Grieco, Caryn Brooks, and my son, Christian Parenti. My thanks to all of them. My editor at St. Martin's Press, Don Reisman, once more proved to be as thoughtful and helpful as any writer might hope. Other people at St. Martin's, including Frances Jones, Emily Ber-leth, and Rich Wright of Omega Pubhshing Services, also deserve mention, as do Jeffrey A. Halley, The University of Texas at San Antonio; Dennis Kalob, Loyola University; Donald McQuarie, Bowling Green State University; Dolly Mullen, University of North Carolina-Asheville; Philip T. Neisser, Potsdam College; Dennis L. Outwater, Suffolk University; and Thomas Simon, lllinois State University for the reviews they did of portions of the manuscript.

Contents

PART I Political Notions **1**

CHAPTER 1 **Myths of Political Quietism** **3**

"You Can't Fight City Hall" 3
"Our Leaders Know Best" 6
"You Cannot Legislate Morality" 8
"Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est la Même Chose" 12

CHAPTER 2 **The New Age Mythology** **15**

New Consciousness, Old Promises 15
Hyper-Individualism and Self-Empowerment 16
Personalized Omnipotence—with No Victims 18
"God in Action": Money and Power 21

CHAPTER 3 **Superpatriotism: The Importance of Being "Number One"** **26**

Patriotism as Militarism 26
The "Number One" Syndrome 29
Bully Thrills and Inverted Morality 31
Superpatriotism as an Imperial Product 33
Real Patriotism 36

CHAPTER 4 **The Politics of Religiosity** **40**

Gott Mit Uns: Divine Politicos 41
Obey and Forgive 44
Selling God—for a Price 46
Class Religion 48
A People's God: Liberation Theology 51

PART I: Political Notions

CHAPTER 1: Myths of Political Quietism

In our society, there exists a number of notions that foster political quietism and inaction. Since they seldom are developed into well-articulated ideologies, they fail to catch the attention of philosophers, social critics, and political theorists.[1] These notions have been widely disseminated by political leaders and news pundits and are familiar refrains in the conversation of ordinary citizens. Their effect, if not their intent, is to discourage popular struggle and encourage an acceptance of existing politico-economic conditions. For that reason, they need to be critically examined.

"YOU CAN'T FIGHT CITY HALL"

Many people believe it is futile to try to effect meaningful political change, a view summed up in the adage, "You can't fight city hall."[2] We are advised not to expect government to respond to our demands. As conservatives and anarchists alike would say, government cannot solve problems; government is the problem. Certainly, in many areas of public life, government is a negative force, an instrument of coercive power that helps to intensify rather than mitigate the inequities suffered by millions of people at home and abroad. Government in the hands of the privileged and powerful will advance the interests of the privileged and powerful—unless democratic forces can mobilize a countervailing power. And that is the question.

The privileged and powerful are those who own the banks, corporations, factories, mines, news and entertainment industries, and agribusiness firms of this country. They are what is meant by the "owning class" or the "rich." The "ruling elites" or "ruling class" are the politically active portion of the owning class. They and their faithful acolytes and scribes compose the Business Roundtable, Business Council, Trilateral Commission, and the Council on Foreign Relations, organizations started by the Rockefellers, Mellons, Morgans and other economic royalists. They are the people who become the secretaries of state, defense, and treasury, the national security advisors and CIA directors. Indeed, they become presidents, vice

presidents, and senators. For the very top positions of state, the ruling class is largely self-recruiting.[3]

Within a political system in which wealth and class play such a dominant role, there seems to be little opportunity for progressive betterment. Popular sentiment is often denied a hearing. People are repeatedly deceived or distracted with a never-ending panorama of pop culture and media puffery. Dissidents are harassed, suppressed, and sometimes even assassinated. In time, people lapse into cynicism and sour resignation. "People are not likely to start a fight," notes Schattschneider, "if they are certain that they are going to be severely penalized for their efforts. In this situation repression may assume the guise of a false unanimity."[4] Indeed, some commentators treat political discouragement and quietude as symptomatic of contentment, arguing that we are too happy with our abundance and freedom to engage in political struggle.[5]

Yet, that is not the whole picture. Despite the powerful array of forces against them, many people still organize, agitate, protest, resist, and fight back—sometimes with an impressive measure of success. In recent decades we have witnessed a number of powerful democratic movements: the civil rights protests to enfranchise African Americans in the South and end lynch-mob rule and segregation, the civil liberties struggle against McCarthyism and government harassment of dissidents, the movement to end the Vietnam war, the anti-imperialist solidarity for El Salvador and Nicaragua, the attempts to build alternative educational and informational institutions, the movement for a nuclear freeze and an end to the arms race, and the struggles for women's rights, gay rights, ecology, and environmentalism. During those same years, we have seen long and bitter labor struggles valiantly fought by coal miners, steel workers, farm workers, airline employees, newspaper staffs, bus drivers, teachers, university staff, hospital workers, and others.

While probably none of these mass movements and labor struggles have met with unqualified success, all have made a difference. All have had an impact in limiting how far the rich and powerful can go in advancing their otherwise uncompromising pursuit of profit and privilege.

The conventional view is that power is antithetical to freedom, a threat to it. This can be true of *state* power and other forms of institutionalized authority. However, *popular* power and freedom are not antithetical but complementary: If you do not have the power to limit the abuses of wealth and position, you do not have much freedom. In order to wrest democratic gains from entrenched interests, the people must mobilize a countervailing power. "The concessions of the privileged to the unprivileged," wrote John Stuart Mill in 1869, "are so seldom brought about by any better motive than the power of the unprivileged to extort them. ..."[6] In 1857, Frederick Douglass wrote: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has, and it never will."[7]

The goal of popular action is not only to limit or rebuff state power but to make it work for democratic ends as opposed to plutocratic ones. Rather than saying "you cannot fight city hall," we might better say that we cannot afford not to. It is often frustrating and sometimes dangerous to challenge those who own and control the land, capital, and technology of society. But, in the long run, it is even more dangerous not to do so. As history shows, people frequently endeavor to resist the disadvantages imposed upon them by unjust socioeconomic conditions. They may be propelled by a vision of a better life for all or by the necessities of their own material conditions. Inequities and iniquities can become so oppressive that submission no longer guarantees survival and the people have nothing to lose in resisting. This is not to say they will always rebel against oppression, but the right combination of anger, hope, and organization sometimes can galvanize them to perform remarkable deeds.

Even in the most desperate circumstances, as exist under slavery, resistance can have an effect. Reflecting on his experience as a slave, Frederick Douglass observed that defiance of any sort was a "fearful hazard."

> Nevertheless, when a slave has nerve enough to exercise it, and boldly approaches his master, with a well-founded complaint against an overseer, though he may be repulsed, and may even have that of which he complains repeated at the time, and though he may be beaten by his master, as well as by his overseer, for his temerity, in the end the policy of complaining is generally vindicated by the relaxed rigor of the overseer's treatment. The latter becomes more careful, and less disposed to use the lash upon such slaves thereafter. ... The overseer very naturally dislikes to have the ear of the master disturbed by complaints; and either upon this

> consideration or upon advice and warning privately given him by his employers, he generally modifies the rigor of his rule. ...[8]

Regarding their own interests, the worst thing people can do is to do nothing, to lapse into political quietism. In 1983, the Reagan administration's welfare chief, Linda McMahon, justified the savage cuts in human services imposed on the poorest and politically weakest element of the population, by noting that their effects must have been tolerable because "We're not seeing riots. We're not seeing people rushing the doors of Congress and the White House."[9] The image of disabled and underemployed subsistence workers hopping jets to storm the capital is almost amusing. Not so the idea that the government can do what it likes to the most vulnerable among us as long as they don't take to the streets and inconvenience the rulers.

Compliant passivity is the goal of all rulers who seek to preserve their entrenched privileges against the claims of the disadvantaged. It is what they usually mean by "stability" and "order."

"OUR LEADERS KNOW BEST"

Across the centuries from Edmund Burke down to Walter Lippmann, one encounters the elitist view that leaders should form their own decisions and not be responsive to popular demands; public affairs should be left in the hands of knowledgeable decision-makers, who supposedly know things we do not know. Political leaders are the first to encourage uncritical faith in themselves. I recall how Vice President Spiro Agnew admonished people for demanding "too much" democratic participation in public affairs. Just as patients must rely on their physician's expertise for medical care, he said, so ordinary citizens must depend on their leaders, the experts in statecraft. Ordinary laypersons can no more expect to make decisions about policy than about medical treatment. Not long after this utterance, Agnew was indicted for illegally using the influence of his office to perform special favors for special friends. In return, these friends—doubtless appreciative of his expertise in statecraft—regularly delivered large sums of cash to him at the vice-president's residence.

In 1991, Polish president Lech Walesa, having used democracy to overthrow the communist state, demanded that the democratically elected parliament suspend its powers and make way for rule by presidential edict. This was necessary in order to deliver the blessings of the free market upon a population that was becoming reluctant about subjecting themselves to the continued "shock therapy" of unemployment, inflation, and the loss of human services and benefits. Reflecting this popular sentiment, parliament resisted some of Walesa's draconian measures. For Walesa, democracy had become a troublesome barrier to the transition to capitalism and had to be stuffed back into the bottle. He resorted to the same kind of antidemocratic elitist analogy as Agnew, arguing that a bus must be driven by the driver and not by the passengers, who might all try to grab the wheel at once and who would succeed only in plowing the vehicle into a tree.

Such arguments against democracy are endless in the history of political theory, going as far back as Plato. They are often framed as arguments by analogy and, as such, they make overextended comparisons between things that are really quite different. The relationship of democratic citizen to officeholder is not the same as the relationship of patient to doctor or passenger to bus driver. But if one really wanted to argue the analogy, one could draw different conclusions from the ones proffered by Agnew and Walesa. Thus, patients should show no more unquestioning trust toward doctors than citizens toward officials. Patients should ask about the purpose of specific medical procedures, get second opinions, and make the final decision on whether to submit to a particular treatment. Too many doctors are trained to act with the same arrogance as Agnew's public official, not listening to what patients have learned from their experiences with their illness.

So with the analogy of the bus: while passengers should not grab the wheel, they certainly have a right to know where they are being taken, by whom, over what course, at what speed, and with what degree of competence and safety. And if they don't like how or where the bus is being driven, they usually can vote with their feet and get off at the next stop—which is something we cannot easily do living in a polity.

No matter how appealing the analogy might be, one is still comparing situations that are at best only roughly parallel in form while vastly different in content. No analogy about doctor-patient or passenger-bus relations can settle the original question regarding the appropriate role of democratic input in public affairs.

The notion that people must trust their leaders has led to many unfortunate fates. History is full of examples of monarchs, dictators, prime ministers, popes, and presidents who were not deserving of the slightest trust, who pursued policies that violated the interests of their people in every way. During the Vietnam War, I heard someone remark that the president must know things we do not, therefore we must put our trust in him and follow his lead. During the 1991 war waged by the United States against Iraq, I heard a student say the same thing: we had to "trust" the president and "have faith in him."

Such expressions of faith should discomfort every democrat. Faith is something we might better reserve for a deity. Trust, as exists between close friends and loved ones, is the one thing we could do without in regard to our leaders. Especially during times of crisis, such as war, we hear that we must have faith in our leaders, for they are the ones who will see us through. What is overlooked is that they are likely the ones who *created* the crisis and should be held accountable for their actions. It is the essence of democracy that we not trust and "have faith" in our leaders. Democracy is a system built on *dis*trust and accountability. At its heart is the idea that we must watch leaders closely, question them sharply, demand investigation, information, explanation, and open debate about policies.

Being a leader is no guarantee of special wisdom or virtue—as Agnew's performance and that of so many others have demonstrated. If one reads the minutes of presidential meetings or the correspondence between top decision-makers or listens to a president or cabinet member at a press conference or reads the memoirs of erstwhile leaders, one is impressed by how expert the policymakers sound, how their thinking seems free of particular enlightenment or insight. One is struck by the self-serving manipulation, the fabricated justifications, inconsistencies, evasions, and downright lies, and the makeshift jumble of contrived and often superficial

arguments that are conjured up to justify domestic and foreign policies that often have no democratic justification. One comes away with a better understanding of why leaders so often insist upon performing secretly, without having to give an account of their actions. They do not know more than we, they just want us to think they do.

"YOU CANNOT LEGISLATE MORALITY"

Besides counseling acquiescence among their constituents, leaders—especially ones who do not want to find public solutions to socioeconomic problems—will offer excuses for their own unwillingness to act. During the 1950s, when the struggle against *de jure* segregation became a national issue. President Dwight Eisenhower maintained that we could not hope to change by federal ukase the deep-seated White supremacist mores of the South. Desegregation would come only with a change in the hearts and minds of the Caucasian majority. You cannot legislate morality, he claimed. A law that tries to do so will meet with defeat.[10]

The example often given to support that position is the failure of the U.S. Constitution's Eighteenth Amendment to stop alcohol consumption. It is even maintained that people consumed more alcohol during the Prohibition era of the 1920s because liquor was made more exciting by being taboo. One writer went so far as to argue that prohibitions have caused most of our addictions.[11] In fact, for all the speakeasy night clubs and bathtub gin, consumption was actually less during the Prohibition era than before or afterwards because alcohol was less available—and availability remains the first condition for consumption, albeit not the only one. When something becomes illegal and thereby less accessible, consumption may not cease altogether but it drops—if the law is enforced.

If it were true that legal prohibition introduces the enticement of taboo, then we would expect consumption to decline when a substance is legalized and becomes less of a forbidden fruit. In fact, after Prohibition was repealed, consumption increased as did the incidence of alcohol-related diseases. So with narcotics. As the supply became more abundant, in part because of the corrupt cooperation of law enforcement agencies, consumption increased. "The stuff is all around. You can't escape it," is the current saying on the

street. In short, when the law or the market makes something more available, consumption tends to increase; when less available, consumption tends to decrease.

The relationship between the law and behavior is clear in regard to gambling. Legalized gambling in places like Reno, Atlantic City, and Las Vegas brings in droves of gamblers (and mobsters). Legalized state lotteries not only have created new revenues for state governments but also new gamblers. In twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia, millions of Americans who would never go to the track or enter an off-track betting parlor now buy lottery tickets at their grocery stores. This ready access is reinforced by the splashy glamorized advertisements and the low price of tickets. Experts note that "it is the easy access to gambling that increases its danger."[12]

An economist at Duke University, who made a study of state lotteries, maintains that compulsive gambling increases the longer the lottery exists in a state. Legalized games also stimulate participation in illegal gambling. Worse still, many new gamblers are people at the economic margins: low income people, new immigrants, and teenagers.[13] In sum, the legalization of gambling has influenced the behavior of people by creating more gamblers.

To say we cannot legislate morality is to overlook the fact that the law does exactly that—albeit with imperfect effect. Certainly there are many people who would not commit theft, embezzlement, rape, or murder even if there were no laws against such things. But other individuals are restrained mostly by the fear of getting caught. In Germany, there were individuals who led fairly normal lives until the advent of Nazism in the 1930s, after which they became SS torturers. The legal and political system allowed them, in fact encouraged them, to indulge in criminally murderous acts. After the war, a number of them fled to the United States and South America. No longer allowed to indulge in mass murder and needing to hide from their past crimes, they once again led inconspicuously peaceful law-abiding lives.

Though it works most punitively against relatively powerless people, the law sometimes deters influential persons. The savings-and-loan scandals of

the early 1990s, costing the taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars, would not have happened had not the banking laws been deregulated to invite speculators to plunge into the trough. More lenient banking laws—inviting high-risk investments, with the financial risk left in the government's hands—created more irresponsible, unrestrained, and unscrupulous behavior on the part of fast-buck investors. The law does make a difference as the absence of banking regulations demonstrates. The law not only can legislate morality, it can encourage immorality—which is the other side of the same coin.

Let us return to the issue of racial segregation that bothered Eisenhower. In 1963, Robert Bork attacked the Public Accommodations Act, a federal law that prohibited racially discriminatory service in public accommodations. Not yet the prominent conservative jurist he was to become under the Nixon and Reagan administrations, Bork questioned the "practicality of enforcing a law which runs contrary to the customs, indeed moral beliefs, of a large portion of the country." To use government to enforce equality, Bork argued, would endanger the liberty of those who owned the accommodations, limiting their freedom to choose their clientele (on a racial basis). Bork seemed not to care that this same law expanded the freedom of African Americans to enjoy equal access to public accommodations. His regard for "freedom" was really a concern for preserving the freedom of the privileged group to practice its racism.

Judge Bork was of another mind in regard to homosexuals. He wrote an opinion for the court of appeals concluding that the navy could dismiss gays from service, for there was no constitutional protection for homosexual conduct and "legislation may implement morality."[15] For Bork the law could not be used to implement morality on behalf of African Americans but it could be used to implement "morality" against gays.

While conservatives and many "moderates" argued that the federal government could not legislate morality in racial relations, the state governments in the South in fact were legislating *immorality*, enforcing racial segregation in housing, schools, transportation, and many other public and private facilities. The Jim Crow leaders who asserted that the law could not be used to good effect had no problem using it to bad effect.

When, in response to pressure by civil-rights advocates, the government began to pass laws on behalf of equality rather than inequality, it made a big difference in people's lives. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is probably the strongest piece of civil-rights legislation passed by Congress in this century. It not only outlaws discriminatory practices that affect voting and representation, it also gives the Justice Department the responsibility and power to prevent such practices. By doubling African-American voter participation and increasing it tenfold in some districts, the act helped alter the power equation in race relations and changed the way White politicians behaved toward African Americans.[16]

Consider the case of Joseph Smitherman, the mayor of Selma, Alabama, for over twenty years. First elected as a segregationist when Selma itself was a major civil-rights battleground, he modified his political views over the years. Why? Because under the Voting Rights Act, backed by the power of the U.S. Justice Department, African Americans began going to the polls in substantial numbers. Few of us in the early 1960s imagined that the incumbent mayor of Selma someday would appoint nonwhite officials and improve services in African-American neighborhoods. The behavior of such officials became more moral, more democratic.

These things came to pass not because of some transformation in Smitherman's inner being that now caused him to love the dispossessed. If we had waited for a change in the hearts and minds of the Smithermans of this country, African Americans would still be living in antebellum servitude. Smitherman and other Southern politicians changed their ways because a more decisive consideration than love was working on them: self-interest. When Caucasians were the only ones voting. Southern politicians followed their self-interest by defending White supremacy. To do anything less would have put them politically at risk. But a restructuring of the wider political conditions—brought about with the coercive assistance of federal law—effected a change in the behavior of numerous Southern leaders, including the likes of George Wallace, an erstwhile archenemy of civil rights during his tenure as governor of Alabama in the 1960s—who got reelected with the help of the African-American vote in the 1970s.

These changes had spin-off effects on the entire Southern community. Whites started seeing nonwhites working at desk jobs in city hall instead of only as janitors. By the force of circumstances, rather than by some magical inner transformation of their hearts and minds, they started to deal with African Americans in equal-status relations and even in positions of authority and responsibility. It is difficult to call someone "boy," when he is the judge presiding over your case.

If you grab people by their self-interest, their hearts and minds will follow. But not entirely. Conditions of scarcity and competition still obtain. Old fears and preferences remain. Racism still serves as a powerful lightning rod for popular grievances. During economic decline or other troubled times, various ethnic groups end up serving as scapegoats. The struggle against racism is a recurrent one. As long as we live in a social system that creates conditions of scarcity and injustice, setting all against all, racism will find fertile ground.

Given this reality, the role of government becomes all the more important. Will the people's legitimate socioeconomic grievances be misdirected by their leaders against vulnerable ethnic and religious groups? Or will leaders use the resources of public office to remove the real causes of popular discontent and channel resentment away from racist outlets? In other words, will they legislate morality or immorality?

"PLUS ÇA CHANGE, PLUS C'EST LA MÊME CHOSE"

The old French saying, "The more it changes, the more it is the same thing," resembles the American one about not being able to fight city hall. But it goes a step further in its cynicism, arguing that it does not much matter what changes are effected because the same kinds of outrages will prevail—albeit with new players in new costumes. By this view, history becomes nothing more than a dreary repetition of human folly and injustice.

Much of history does seem to fit that description. Many times hopeful developments end in misery and mishap. New policies and leaders seem to bring the same old results. And like Victor Hugo, one is left to ask, "Will the future ever arrive?" Furthermore, when things do change in a significant

way, it can be for the worse—as with global ecology, the scale and proficiency of military destructiveness, the neo-imperialist impoverishment of weaker nations, and the abuses of power imposed by technologies of surveillance and violence. So one is tempted to conclude, *"plus ça change, plus c'est miserable."*

Yet, many things have improved through democratic struggle. The conditions of labor, never really secure in a capitalist society, have advanced dramatically in some western countries since the Industrial Revolution, when sickened and undernourished children toiled in factories from dawn to dusk. The transition from slavery to serfdom to "free labor" to organized labor represents a net gain in the human condition. Who among us, even a low-paid worker, would trade their lot for that of a slave in ancient Rome or the antebellum South or even for an industrial worker of an earlier time—for whom such things as collective bargaining, arbitration, formal grievances, occupational safety, job benefits, unemployment insurance, seniority, and medical coverage were but a chimera.

Likewise, the condition of women has improved—at least in some countries—through decades of struggle. In nineteenth-century America, women in various states had no property rights in marriage. Most were granted no social identity other than that which they gained from their families or from marital association with a man. They could not vote or occupy public office. They had no entry into the job market except for a few low-paying occupations. They had no access to legal birth control and safe abortions. But whatever gains have been won, women who struggle against injustice are understandably loath to be told, "You've come a long way." What they hear in such reassurances is that they should be content with their present lot. Given their justifiable sense of outrage regarding the continuing injustices they face in present-day society, politically aware women are understandably inclined to do the opposite: emphasize the abuses they endure and ignore the accomplishments, claiming they are as oppressed as ever. But the truth is, as bad as women have it today in the United States, they had it worse in yesteryear—as we are well reminded whenever reactionism threatens to plunge us back to yesteryear, and whenever we observe the condition of women in a host of other countries.

Much the same can be said about racial oppression. Thus, note the victorious struggles against lynch-mob rule, segregation in public accomodations, electoral disfranchisement, and the like. But when a White supremacist senator like Strom Thurmond of South Carolina declares in a tone devoid of admiration: "No one has made more progress than the nigra people" (as I once heard him say at a Senate committee hearing), African Americans are not inclined to sit back and be quietly grateful—which is what the senator wants them to be. Not surprisingly, some militants are inclined to do just the opposite, to deny that anything has really changed. "We are still on the plantation, living under the whip," is the way I heard one community leader put it. Such assertions manifest an imperfect appreciation of the unspeakable horrors of antebellum slavery and deny the courageous struggles won by generations of oppressed people against slavery and segregation.

Not only among those who fight for gender and racial equality but throughout the entire Left, it is too often taken as a badge of militancy to be as negative as possible, dismissing every gain as a crumb and a subterfuge —and even a disguised oppression. While the powers that be try to transform every policy vice into a virtue, the understandable but inaccurate inclination of protestors is to change every virtue into a vice. It is one thing to be uncompromising in one's dedication to justice and democracy and something else to be unwilling to see that incremental gains are important steps to further struggles, that victories can be and have been won, and that these accomplishments—though incomplete and insufficient—sometimes bring a real betterment to the lives of millions of people. (This is not to deny that some gains are vastly inadequate in solving the horrendous problems faced by underprivileged peoples.)

The supermilitant who so thoroughly grasps the larger picture as to see nothing significantly good in any immediate struggle, ends up in a state of noisy inaction, eschewing coalitions, or worse, becoming a divisive force, "outlefting" everyone else but accomplishing little.

Only by ignoring the differences in content among various oppressions can we assert that no "real" change has been achieved. To assert that a woman is "raped" every time a man casts a salacious glance her way may be an

effective rhetorical device to highlight the subtler forms of male aggression, but it simultaneously diminishes the seriousness of rape by so expanding and diluting its meaning. It reduces content to form. While the basic *form* of man-victimizing-woman cannot be denied both in the act of visual harassment and the act of criminal sexual violence, the *content* is markedly different in the respective instances. To reduce content to form is to reduce reality to polemic. It may make us more militant-sounding but not more effective and durable in fighting for social justice.

Let nothing said above detract from the understanding that it was *militancy* in labor struggles, civil rights, and women'f[s rights that generated the kind of agitation and popular force from which change did occur. Changes have been won through struggle against a money-dominated politico-economic system that seldom operates democratically on its own. But such past victories should not be read as a call for complacency. In this plutocracy, many democratic gains have yet to be won and past gains are ever in danger of being rolled back.

CHAPTER 2: The New Age Mythology

There are many roads to political quietism. In contrast to the cynical defeatism discussed in the previous chapter are the beliefs of the 1960s youth culture or counterculture that carried over to what is called the "New Age" approach of today; an amalgam of Eastern mysticism, Western occultism, self-help psychology, and alternative health practices. In place of political impotence, New Age enthusiasts teach a kind of personalized omnipotence, reducing social problems to a matter of interior mind-set.

NEW CONSCIOUSNESS, OLD PROMISES

Some people indulge in New Age enthusiasms by reading and practicing on their own and occasionally attending a workshop or lecture. Others submit to the regimens of one or another cult. New Age books, artifacts, and programs constitute a billion-dollar industry. A 1978 Gallup poll estimated that some ten million Americans were engaged in some aspect of Eastern mysticism. Additional millions of adherents embrace the more secular "self-help" approaches.

New Age consciousness has some things to its credit. Back when the good life was defined as the immobile life (the less physical exertion expended, the better). New Age adherents were jogging and doing yoga and aerobics. While soft-drink companies were pushing their sugar-ridden products and the meat and dairy industries had us convinced that daily servings of beef and milk were vital to our health, New Age nutritionists were promoting the benefits of a sugar-free, low-fat, whole grain intake. While agribusiness thought nothing of spraying crops with toxic pesticides and utilizing chemicalized food processing. New Age proponents opted for organic and natural foods.

While the medical establishment monopolized what still passes for health science. New Age adherents pursued less invasive and sometimes beneficial alternative treatments. It was the established allopathic medical practitioners who for centuries bled their patients, burned and poisoned them with mercury, chained and tormented the mentally ill, ordered

homosexuals and recalcitrant women into insane asylums, and spread a variety of fatal diseases in their filthy hospitals while remaining steadfastly ignorant of minimal sanitary standards. Today many physicians remain just as ignorant of nutritional science, preventive medicine, and alternative treatments.

At the same time, some New Age practitioners are themselves not above promoting dubious claims. They offer workshops in self-realization, dream harnessing, guided imagery, visualizations, primal screaming, channeling, rolfing, polarity balancing, aura readings, tarot readings, palmistry, psychic readings, gemstone healing, astrological charting, rebirthing, levitation, spiritual counseling, and other strategems. The promised payoffs range from minor practicalities to miraculous cures, from being able to keep a neater home to transforming one's entire personality.

In the diverse array of enthusiasms that come under the New Age rubric, two general orientations might be discerned. There are the "inspirationists," who focus exclusively on benefits in the here and now, and the "spiritualists," who tell us that the material world is but a passing shadow compared to the mystic realm beyond, where transcendent bliss awaits us. Many New Age theories are not new at all, being borrowed from Yoga, Hinduism, Taoism, Zen Buddism, and other ancient disciplines, transmitted by gurus from India and Tibet or, as it might be, from Brooklyn and California.

What I want to criticize are not New Age practices—some of which strike me as possibly beneficial, others as grossly counterfeit—but the way New Age notions discourage engagement with social problems and political realities.[1]

HYPER-INDIVIDUALISM AND SELF-EMPOWERMENT

Both inspirationists and spiritualists believe that individuals have great untapped powers within themselves that have been overlooked or kept submerged. Inspirationist guru Leo Buscaglia tells us "You do have magic. Get in touch with it. ... It all starts with you. You make the world."[2] For the spiritualists, this internal power reservoir is linked to a metaphysical realm.

The goal is to experience "the larger reality of the sacred wholeness that lies at the heart of being," to become one with the cosmic One.[3] Whether inspirationist or spiritualist, the supreme guide for comprehending the world is to be found in solipsistic experience. The approach is not much different from psychotherapeutic methods that brush aside the victimizations of the real world; what counts is how reality is *perceived*.[4] As *est* founder Werner Erhard proclaimed, "Reality is make-believe."[5]

Intuition is valued over reasoning. The New Age approach to knowledge is quite different from the scientific method that seeks empirical evidence, replication, and validation, and treats purely subjective experiences as largely unreliable. In the New Age mode, the more subjective and grounded in personal feeling a perception is, the more true it must be. The very ineffable quality of an experience is taken as evidence of its depth within oneself and its veracity and reality—as with mystical revelation and other experiences of faith.

The sociologist Charles Horton Cooley once said that a separate individual is an abstraction unknown to experience. Yet many New Agers place great value on a self-contained individuality. To need others is viewed as a sign of insufficiency, rather than a normal desire of social beings. To be in need of no one is supposedly to be more developed and liberated.[6] Thus are the unfortunate necessities of modern-day isolation transformed into virtuous accomplishments.

Not all New Age advocates are of this persuasion. Those who have been called the "touchy-feelies" do not promote individual detachment; just the opposite. They congregate to touch, smile, laugh, and cry together, always with lots of hugs. Here too, the emphasis is on self-affirmation.

New Age self-centeredness resembles the hyper-individualism of the free-market society in which it flourishes. Under capitalism, self-reliance is glorified (most persistently and most ironically by those corporate interests that themselves depend on the government for all sorts of services and supports). The corporate capitalist myth of "rugged individualism" features an atomized person, attached to no one else (except possibly an isolated family molecule), producing and consuming for himself or herself, owing

nothing to society for whatever he or she accomplishes.[7] Society becomes an amalgam of self-interested beings who enter into market relations that reduce other people to instrumental values. In their focus on the self, the yuppie and the yogi are not that far apart.

In truth, no human accomplishment is an autonomous thing. The athlete, the artist, the business leader, the scientist, and other such achievers, all draw upon the accumulated skills and material resources of those who preceded them and those who currently work with or for them. Even the other-worldly guru is dependent on others who feed and shelter him while he ventures into "higher realms." Peter Marin sums it up:

> Every privilege, every object, every "good" comes to us as the result of ... the shared labor of others; the language we use and the beliefs we hold and the ways we experience ourselves. Each of these involves a world of others into which we are entered every moment of our lives. Idly, for instance, we take coffee and sugar in the mornings, and even that simple act immerses us immediately in the larger world. Both the sugar and coffee ... have been harvested by specific persons, most probably in a country where the land belongs by right to others than those who [now possess] it, where the wages paid those who work it are exploitive and low. No doubt, too, the political system underlying the distribution of land is maintained in large part by the policies enacted and the armies acting in our name. ... [T]he coffee ... has nothing to do with individual will and everything to do with economics and history.[8]

What the New Age ideology leaves out is the common struggle for collective empowerment and social betterment. It is one thing to affirm our faith in the value of the individual and something else to reduce all valued affirmations to individual experience, to see reality only through the prism of self.

PERSONALIZED OMNIPOTENCE—WITH NO VICTIMS

Once we treat interior experience as all-important, it is but a short step to claiming a personalized omnipotence. As New Agers frequently say, "You create your own reality," or "You choose your own reality." Everyone is supposedly the author of his or her fate. Self-help inspirationist Buscaglia instructs us: "If you don't like the scene you're in, if you're unhappy ... change your scene. Paint a new backdrop. Surround yourself with new actors. Write a new play—and if it's not a good play, get the hell off the

stage and write another one."[9] Social reality becomes nothing more than a matter of mind-set and self-will.

Such notions can be carried to chilling extremes by right-wing ideologues. Thus Eileen Marie Gardner, special assistant in the U.S. Department of Education during the Reagan administration, maintained that even the handicapped and disabled make their own destiny:

> They falsely assume that the lottery of life has penalized them at random. This is not so. Nothing comes to an individual that he has not, at some point in his development, summoned. Each of us is responsible for his life situation. ... There is no injustice in the universe. As unfair as it may seem, a person's external circumstances do fit his level of inner spiritual development. ... Those of the handicapped constituency who seek to have others bear their burdens and eliminate their challenges are seeking to avoid the central issues of their lives.[10]

These "central issues" include Down's syndrome, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, spina bifida, and other incapacitating afflictions.

Gardner's obscurantist notions bear a strong resemblance to the yogic view that congenital disabilities are deserved, for they reflect the karmic development of one's soul. In other words, if you were born with cystic fibrosis, it is a punishment for the sins of past lives. The same holds for one's class condition. As a disillusioned Hindu devotee puts it: "Our spiritual leader taught us that if you are born a poor peasant in a Third World country, destined to live out your life in hopeless poverty, it is because you acted badly in past lives. Conversely, if you are born to wealth or accumulate it, it is because you have earned this good fortune through previous good actions. It is yours to enjoy guilt-free."[11]

One critic interviewed therapists and est devotees who maintained that individual will is all-powerful and determines one's fate, that those who are poor and hungry must have wished it on themselves, that suffering is merely the result of imperfect consciousness, that those who live well amidst so much deprivation have a higher consciousness, that someone who had been raped and murdered in some way willed it, that the victims of the Holocaust brought themselves to their awful fate, and that whatever one thinks to be true is true, for truth is identical to belief.[12]

When injustice is recognized, it is given an individualized genesis. Social, political, and ecological problems "are part and parcel of our way of viewing ourselves and the world. ... Nothing short of an inner revolution in the way we experience the world will truly help solve them." 13 It follows that "you cannot hope to improve the world until you first set yourself aright." Once that is accomplished, you may find nothing wrong with the world. A brochure for a New Age workshop entitled "A Course in Miracles," tells us that "love" is what "happens when we stop trying to change the world, and change our minds instead about how we see it. ... We are not victims of the world, and when we understand this we learn to forgive others, enabling us to forgive ourselves."[14]

If there are no victims, there are no victimizers. We are all equally responsible for the world's ills, both the powerful and the powerless, the oppressor and the oppressed, the rapist and the raped, the child abuser and the abused child, the exploiter and the exploited, the warmonger and the war victim, the polluter and the sickened, the greedy few and the needy many. Commenting admiringly on how South African Bishop Tutu preached "humility and forgiveness" in the face of tyranny, one writer concluded, "If we truly want peace, shouldn't we stop passing judgment on others and look into our own hearts, so that we, too, don't become part of another collective evil? ... Who are we to say that those dead [Nazi SS] soldiers at Bitberg were guilty? It is too easy to project our own aggression onto an evil 'other.'" We must not ignore "the thinly veiled hatred within our own hearts."[15] Resentment and anger are the problem, not the social injustices that might cause them.

For the New Ager, a calm mind is essential for spiritual progress. Unselfish personal actions may be advocated as a way of healing and nurturing the self (which makes them anything but unselfish), but political action against unjust policies is thought to encourage antagonisms and personal negativity.[16] In *The Greening of America,* a book that lamentably became a best-seller in the early 1970s, inspirationist Charles Reich tells us, "Nobody wants inadequate housing and medical care—only the machine. Nobody wants war except the machine. ... There is no need, then, to fight any group of people in America." Reich further assures us, "All that is needed to bring about change is to capture [the machine's] controls—and they are held by

nobody." Messy questions about state power and class privilege, economic exploitation, and inequitable life chances are reduced to life-styles. "The way to destroy the power of the corporate state is to live differently now. The grand strategy is this: resist the state, when you must; avoid it, when you can; but listen to music, dance, seek out nature, laugh, be happy, be beautiful. ..."[17]

One New Age devotee criticized the environmental movement for "broadcasting a doom, gloom and guilt message" and "projecting waves of doom and disapproval" that have caused the movement to be "disregarded for so long." But luckily "the tide is beginning to turn. It is being realized that the way to bring healing change is to love and nurture ourselves and others; to have fun, to enjoy delicious food, to cultivate prolific gardens [and] make beautiful clothes."[18] To be sure, there is nothing wrong and much good in loving and nurturing ourselves with fun and food. What is wrong is the notion that those activities will rectify the terrible realities of the ecological crisis. Such nostrums seem more like a way of wishing away that crisis.

For most New Agers, involvement in worldly affairs is little more than a distraction from self-development. The yogi Swami Srivananda advises, "Reform yourself. Society will reform itself. Get worldliness out of your heart. The world will take care of itself. Remove the world out of your mind. The world will be peaceful. That is the only solution. ... If each man [sic] tries to work out his own salvation, there will be nobody to create the problems."[19]

The New Age nexus is largely a class-bound indulgence. One study shows that most cult followers are college educated Caucasians from upper- or middle-class homes.[20] Drastically underrepresented are impoverished farm laborers, unemployed factory workers, besieged inner-city dwellers, battered women, and other victims, who have a need for empowerment and protection that has little to do with the rarefied refinements of self-absorbed consciousness. How do we empower ourselves without also acting on the social conditions that limit our life chances and our ability to be empowered? "The personal is political" means that political realities have a

dimension in our personal lives. But it does not mean that the political can be reduced to the personal.

Most New Age leaders manifest a level of thought and information regarding gender, racial, and politico-economic struggles that is not very profound, being ingested mostly from conventional mainstream news sources. What Jeffrey Masson says about many psychotherapists would hold for most New Age leaders. In their world view, "there is no class analysis, and no [concern about] poverty, inequality, hunger, or traumas such as war, rape and child abuse."[21]

New Agers claim, but do not demonstrate, that improvement of self will lead to improvement of the world. Without denying the desirability of self-improvement, we might ask, does there exist a two-step process: first, I reform myself, then the world around me? Do devotees ever feel sufficiently enlightened, energized, and self-empowered to do battle with the injustices of the larger world? Most New Age enthusiasms do not bestow a more developed ethical commitment. The goal is self-gain not moral advancement.[22] A New Age ideology that says only you, not the world, needs fixing is not likely to produce dedicated reformers. One personal growth practitioner noted, "People have taken est, and now they want a business plan"; now they seek classes in "prosperity training and creative financing techniques."[23] They become careerists within the system, not crusaders against it.

What we call the "self" and "inner consciousness" are not finished entities, rather they are intimately linked to social experience. Individual realization needs community and communion with others."[24] To be sure, we all have a subjective, intrapsychic environment that sometimes needs tending to. But we should not overlook how the process of democratic struggle itself can help bring about inner growth, as we become participants in worldly affairs.

"GOD IN ACTION": MONEY AND POWER

New Age gurus advocate spiritual regeneration while themselves manifesting a notable fascination for material acquisition. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, one of the gurus who came here from India to do good and

ended up doing well, had this to say when interviewed in the *Washington Post*:

Q: You're a multimillion dollar corporation. You have property all over.

A: But that is not yet enough. Want more and more. ... Here I sit with all the possibilities. I need as much money as possible.

Q: Why don't you raise money and distribute it to needy people? Would this not be a more effective way to bring about change?

A: No, no, it's not the money that can make one happy.

Q: How can Third World people think about their consciousness when they're hungry?

A: If they use their brain properly ... the infinitivity of nature will make them capable of not only earning their ordinary bread but very first-class bread.[25]

Phil Laut of Theta Seminars (a western Massachusetts association calling itself a collection of "divine beings in the self-improvement business") conducted a "Money Seminar" in which he proffered these revelations: "What actually creates money is the mind. ... Money in the material universe is like God in the spiritual. Money is God in action." Nor is there not enough to go around. That sort of thinking divides people. "If you resent rich people, you'll never become rich."[26] One student at this seminar, an ironworker, injected a dash of reality: "At my job I inhale cast-iron dust, so naturally I associate work with suffering. ... I have to suffer in order to make money." Did he not therefore have the right to resent his rich and exploitative employers? Laut responded, "So you feel ... 'the more money I have the more I have to suffer.' How can you increase your income with an attitude like that?" The worker was describing an occupational victimization—which the enlightened teacher reduced to a subjective attitude within the victim.

A cult participant described a common problem within New Age organizations: the discrepancy in riches between leader and followers. "I

know of several people who have several children who were living on less that $300 a month, and in some cases $7 a week. That disturbed me when I saw [the guru] with a fleet of Mercedes and Cadillacs and several homes."[27] How does the holy leader, who supposedly lives only to impart spiritual teachings, explain his or her opulent life-style? One guru contrasted himself favorably with the Indian ascetics who remove themselves from worldly temptations in order to progress spiritually. How much more advanced was he who could live uncorrupted amidst so much wealth—all of which supposedly gravitated to him because of his elevated spiritual state. The truth was, wealth came to him because his followers worked long hours at the guru's enterprises and lived in poverty so they could donate the better part of their earnings and life savings toward the further enrichment of their holy leader.[28]

Many (but not all) New Age businesses operate like other corporate enterprises. The Whole Foods Market in Berkeley, California, is a case in point. It offers organic foods and a community bulletin board. Its CEO described his enterprise as "driven by a vision of creating a better world" with management and labor working together "with openness, trust, community, shared purpose, joy, and love."[29] But not much love was shown to a worker who was fired for being an outspoken union supporter, nor to the other employees who went out on strike. Whole Foods was the only nonunionized supermarket in Berkeley, paying workers an average of $1 to $5 less per hour than the town's other supermarkets and offering inferior benefits. While its CEO claimed that the store was owned mostly by its workers, closer examination revealed that he and other upper-level executives possessed the vast majority of stock. Furthermore, Whole Foods Inc., the country's largest natural foods retailer, is partly financed by venture capital from firms whose portfolios include corporate polluters and contracts with the defense industry, the Air Force, and the CIA.[30]

As the guru is elevated, the followers are infantilized and diminished. Many persons (but not all) emerge from cults feeling embittered and exploited by the experience. They relate how their self-confidence was undermined, how they learned to distrust their own judgment, how they gave their money, labor, and uncritical obedience to the self-enriching leader, and how they were separated from former friends, given new names, identities, and belief

systems. As one ex-votary put it, "It's classic brainwashing. They make them so they cannot fit in with other parts of society."[31]

Some New Agers believe "there are changes taking place internally in the whole nature of government and corporations" because more of their numbers are moving into positions of power.[32] There is no evidence to support this view. To the extent, if any, that corporations and government show regard for the public interest, it can be credited to the organized pressure of democratic forces and not to any new enlightenment manifested by those at the centers of wealth and power.

At least one erstwhile national leader now promotes a sort of New Age spiritualism. In 1992, the former president of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel —who was raised by governesses and chauffeurs in a fervently anti-communist, wealthy family and who has reclaimed for his private ownership a publicly owned building and other holdings that once belonged to his family—called for a new breed of political leader, who would rely less on "rational, cognitive thinking," and show "humility in the face of the mysterious order of Being" and "trust in his own subjectivity as his principal link with the subjectivity of the world." We should have a "sense of transcendental responsibility, archetypal wisdom," and the ability "to get to the heart of reality through personal experience." Havel lists the ecological dangers facing the world but denounces the idea of rational, collective social efforts to solve them. He denounces democracy's "traditional mechanisms" for being linked to "the cult of objectivity and statistical average."[33] He thinks he is being visionary when in fact he is putting forth an elitist subjectivism and antidemocratic obscurantism.

By propagating an apolitical *Weltanschauung*, New Age enthusiasms have done little to thwart the retrogressive forces that accumulate wealth and military power, destroy the environment, obliterate indigenous cultures, build authoritarian organizations, and oppress millions of people throughout much of the world. One might recall the counterculture that arose in Germany during the 1920s. German youth, mainly the offspring of affluent middle-class urban professionals, took to the countryside to rediscover nature, revived ancient festivals, and remained determinedly apolitical. Emphasis was on personal experience. These *Wandervogel* talked of an

"Inward Way" to enlightenment. Change people, then society would change. Having ignored political realities for so long, they added little strength to the anti-Nazi movement. If anything, "they gave Hitler space."

Other secret cults emerged in Germany. Anti-Semitic, nationalistic, and atavistic, they glorified the primitive volk spirit and "pure" ancient Teutonic culture.[34] The Nazis were soon to exploit this marriage of occultism and nationalism. Hitler talked of the *Volkgemeinschaft*, one people bonded in mystical community under the leadership of the fuehrer. The Hitler youth movement copied the folk mythology, arcane symbols, and nationalistic racism of the earlier cults, adding a strong dose of Nazi discipline.[35] In addition, Protestant youth groups, or "Bible circles" abounded in Germany. By 1931, more than 70 percent of Bible circle devotees were pro-Nazi.[36]

A moving spirit of New Age thinking is the famous psychiatrist Carl Jung. Jungian symbols and archetypes abound in New Age writings. Jung himself was an anti-Semite and Nazi admirer who talked of "the Jewish problem" and the differences "between Germanic and Jewish psychology." He thought well of the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini and saw Adolph Hitler as "the truly mystic medicine man ... a spiritual vessel, a "demi-deity.'"[37] When the president of the German Medical Society for Psychotherapy resigned because of the Nazi takeover in 1933, Jung filled the post and became editor of its official journal. In that capacity, he associated with Nazi sympathizers and Nazi psychiatrists like M. H. Goering, nephew of one of Nazi Germany's leaders Hermann Goering. Jung's journal carried occasional articles that quoted Hitler favorably, praised Nazism, and propagated racism, including a selection by Jung himself that talked of the deficiencies of the Jewish race and the moral superiority of the "Aryan unconscious." He hailed Nazism for energizing the deeper recesses of the Germanic soul. Not surprisingly, his work was quoted favorably by Nazi authors.[38]

Jung offered racist apologies for colonialism: "The savage inhabitants of a country have to be mastered. ... [The master] must be ruthless. He must sacrifice everything soft and fine for the sake of mastering savages."[42] Jung believed that the modern-day African and other non-Europeans had a more primitive mental development than the European and were childlike in their

impulses and thoughts, or lack of thoughts. Referring to the primitive traces of his own unconscious Jung wrote, "I have been led by dreams, like any primitive. I am ashamed to say so, but I am as primitive as any nigger, because I do not know!"[40] After the defeat of Nazism, Jung began to heap criticisms on Hitler in an attempt to prove himself clean of collaboration. But he continued to spin theories about the biologically less-developed nature of the African's mind.[41]

Jung was immersed in mythology, spirituality, "archetypal memories," the wisdom of the "collective unconscious," alchemy, Teutonic mythology, and other occult phenomena—many of which interested the Nazis also. New Age ideology cannot be equated with Nazism just because it draws upon the work of a Nazi collaborator. But it is worth noting how Jung's obscurantism serves both, as myth is transformed in accordance with the demands of its historic audiences.

An alienating social matrix becomes fertile land for aberrant enthusiasms. Real grievances cause people to embrace hokey healers or fascist leaders. These false solutions do not make the original complaints any less real. The ancient Greeks understood that when we are divorced from the polis, deprived of engagement in the community by exile or by a tyrant, or confined totally to the privatized realm, we are denied our full humanity. Native American Indians and other indigenous peoples know that to inflict upon our natural environment a misdirected accumulation process for the enrichment of the few also removes us from our full humanity. Real self-empowerment should combine personal awakening with political concerns. We must show that greed and self-enrichment for the few should not be—and really cannot be—the way to a happy society for all. Blending private and public concerns is the best method of ridding ourselves of poverty, including the poverty of compassion and personal feeling that plagues too many of our citizens. All this is easier said than done. Whatever self-help is gleaned from New Age thought, it would seem that the political quietism it fosters does not bring us toward any real liberation—neither social nor personal.

CHAPTER 3: Superpatriotism: The Importance of Being "Number One"

As a guest on radio talk shows, I have criticized aspects of U.S. public policy. On one such occasion, an irate listener called to ask me, "Don't you love your country?" Here was someone who saw fit to question my patriotism because I questioned the policies of U.S. leaders. The caller was manifesting a symptom of what might be called "superpatriotism," the tendency to place nationalistic pride and supremacy above every other public consideration, the readiness to follow our leaders uncritically in their dealings with other nations, especially confrontations involving the use of U.S. military force and violence.

PATRIOTISM AS MILITARISM

Whether or not this superpatriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels, as Dr. Johnson might say, it is a highly emotive force used by political leaders and ordinary citizens to discourage critical public discourse and limit democratic protest. It is time the superpatriots explained what their brand of patriotism is all about. What, for instance, do they mean when they say they love their country? Do they love every street and lane, every hill and vale? Most of us have had direct exposure only to relatively few parts of this nation's vast expanse. Perhaps love of country means loving the American people, a vast aggregate of widely diverse ethnic, religious, and class groups. Here again, even the most gregarious among us know only a small percentage of the total population. In any case, there are ethnic elements among us whom the more bigoted superpatriots do not at all love.

We can "love" whole peoples in the abstract because we feel some common attachment: we are all Americans. But what is so particularly lovable about Americans? We may say we love Americans because they are a nice people, but then it is their "peopleness" we are considering, not their Americanism, whatever that is. In fact, some of them are not nice people. Among the Americans I am not too crazy about are bigots, profiteers, corrupt and self-serving leaders, and rabid superpatriots.

Perhaps our superpatriots love America for its history and culture? One would doubt it, since there is so much about our country's history and culture that is unknown to them or unappreciated when made known. Furthermore, there is a terrible side to our history that is anything but lovable: the extermination of Native American Indian nations; the enslavement of African people; and the wars of aggression against Mexico, Central America, Canada, Spain, the Philippines, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Grenada, Panama, Iraq, and others. Nor might we be all that enamored with certain aspects of our culture, such as the mind-abuse of prime-time television, the dispiriting commercialism, the corporate greed, the ecological desecration, and the gender, racial, and economic injustice.

Many superpatriots say they love America because of its freedom; supposedly, we can say what we like and we have economic opportunity as in no other country; we can become rich if we have the right stuff. Here again, the claim should be greeted skeptically. We are not as free as we think. To be too outspoken and too out of step in one's political opinions is to put one's career in jeopardy. In any case, dissident views, such as the critical ideas regarding capitalism and class power discussed later in this book, are not allowed to reach mass audiences.[1] The major media are giant corporations that seldom, if ever, allow any questioning of the existing corporate system or the doings of the national security state. The assumptions behind U.S. foreign policy go unexamined and uncriticized in news analysis and commentary. Those who have a dissident view regarding U.S. imperialism do not get an opportunity to voice it to any mass audience. The very idea of "U.S. imperialism" would sound strange to most Americans—but not to millions of people in Latin America and other nations.[2]

As for economic freedom, it works best for those who have a lot of money to begin with. The concentration of wealth and power, which is the essence of capital accumulation, does not give lots of us the opportunity to become rich but to become economically dependent, threatened by unemployment, inflation, and want, obliged to work harder and harder to stay afloat. Even if it were easy to become a millionaire—what is so great about that? Why should the cash nexus be grounds for loving one's country?

The "America" our superpatriots claim to love is neither a geographic totality, nor a vast population, nor a history or culture, nor really a land of such unlimited opportunity and freedom. It is an ideological abstraction, an emotive symbol represented by other abstract symbols like the flag. Yet, superpatriotism is not totally devoid of content. Its main substance is militarism. Our patriotic vignettes are usually drawn from our military history: Valley Forge, the Alamo, Gettysburg, raising the flag on Iwo Jima, and the like. Our country right or wrong, but mostly our country at war or ready for war. The commemorations conducted during national holidays would be incomplete without the marching troops, martial music, and formations of fighter planes zooming overhead. July 4th fireworks themselves are a benign replication of "the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air," as goes our top patriotic song. Some television stations sign off the air by playing the national anthem, accompanied by footage of fighter planes, aircraft carriers, and other militaristic images that saturate the TV-marinated brains of so many of our compatriots.

Max Weber said that the state alone claims a "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."[3] What we call *government* is a system of policy formulation and implementation. But the state is something else. Its irreducible essence rests in the military, the police, the secret intelligence services, those who systematically mobilize force against dissenters within the polity and against other polities. What is being celebrated in superpatriotic parades is not the shared community of productive beings known as the commonwealth, nor the system of responsible rule known as democratic government; what is on display is *Macht,* the visible manifestations of state power, the soldiers with their weaponry and flags.

State power is wielded by the executive, as personified in the president and the national security apparatus. Representing the entire nation rather than a particular congressional district, the president, "possesses a sort of divine right," as Marx noted of the French presidency in the Second Republic in 1852. "He is the elect of the nation," an embodiment of the national spirit who stands "in a personal relation, to the nation. ... The National Assembly, indeed, exhibits in its individual representatives the manifold aspects of the national spirit, but in the President this national spirit finds its incarnation."[4]

The Constitution gives Congress, not the president, the power to make war. Yet most U.S. wars are "undeclared." U.S. forces are committed to action by presidential order, without a formal declaration of war by Congress. While the legislators debated whether U.S. forces should engage in hostilities against Iraq, President Bush went on record as saying, "I don't care if I get one vote in Congress. We're going in."[5] Undeclared wars are unconstitutional acts perpetrated by presidents. They get away with it because presidents never seem more the incarnations of national spirit as when they are rallying the country to war. Assisted by the propaganda power of the corporate media, the executive succeeds in stirring up a jingoistic war fever. At such times of "crisis" and "national peril" Congress would not dare impeach the commander in chief for such a trifling as an undeclared war, especially since so many members of the legislature are themselves fervent flag-waivers and militarists. So we see how superpatriotism lends itself to the lawless primacy of state power over constitutional government.

THE "NUMBER ONE" SYNDROME

For the superpatriot, love of country is interlaced with competitive feelings toward other countries. Superpatriots believe that our country is "number one." The number-one syndrome is a belief in American supremacy. In the late 1960s, President Richard Nixon said: "American is still number one." (The "still" bespeaking of an anxiety that there might have been some slippage in our position.) The 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis repeatedly asserted that "we have to make America number one again." In the 1992 campaign, Republican presidential incumbent George Bush reassured us that America really is number one. Within this nationalistic mythology lurks the notion that we are in some kind of perpetually adversarial relationship with all the other nations of the world and that somehow our greatness or goodness can be measured only in invidious comparison to them, only in our ability to predominate.

The superpatriots neither explain what is so important about being number one, nor why scores of other nations feel no similar compulsion to be top banana. Nor do they explain what it means to be number one? In exactly what categories are we number one? Population? No, certainly China walks

away with all the awards in that category. Geographic size? No, Russia, Canada, and Brazil have more real estate than we. Steel production and other basic industries? We used to be number one in these but our superpatriotic corporate leaders have taken to abandoning our communities and exporting our jobs and industries to cheaper overseas labor markets where they can rake in higher profits. Are we number one in trade? The Europeans and Japanese seem to be outselling us, or so it appears to anyone who has bought any durable-use consumer goods in recent years. Number one in finance? The top banks in the world are now Japanese.

What then is the United States number one in? As best I can tell, it gets down to two things: wealth and military might. But what does it mean to celebrate the fact that "we are the richest nation in the world," in a world of such poverty? And who are the "we" who compose this "rich nation"? Wealth does not reside in a nation taken as an undifferentiated totality. It is possessed by individuals. But, as already noted, most individuals in this country are not wealthy. The riches of the United States are highly unequally distributed. Ours is a nation with an enormous glut of commodity goods, great accumulations of wealth that are in the hands of 2 percent of the population, a middle class that knows no real economic security, a large low-income population that lives in chronic need, and a substantial number of extremely poor who endure severe deprivation. There are Western European social democracies that have a more equitable standard of living and distribution of public services. In that sense, they are richer than we, or freer from poverty and want. To celebrate our national wealth, then, one might first consider how it is distributed and used. Why be proud of "our" riches when a small number at the top of the economic ladder control more of it than all the rest of us combined, and when 90 percent of our population has little or no net financial assets.[6]

Likewise, we might question why being number one in military might is such a great accomplishment. In 1992, President Bush said, "We must be a military superpower"[7]—meaning that the United States must continue to have the ability to deliver massive death and destruction upon other nations. The celebration of military might is predicated on the questionable assumption that such might is used for laudatory purposes only. But a closer

examination of whose interests are being served at home and abroad might make us less likely to see U.S. military power as a source of national pride.

Bush said nothing about the costs of that militarism: the distorted technology, material waste, ecological devastation, the biggest national debt in the world, high taxes, a neglect of social needs and infrastructure, and the threat, discomfort, and terrible consequences smaller countries must endure when on the receiving end of a superpower's military might.

There are other things in which the United States is number one, but these are never mentioned by our corporate superpatriots. We are number one in handguns and other firearms and are the most heavily armed people on earth.[8] Compared to other industrial nations, the United States is number one in homicides. Among young males, the homicide rate is twenty times higher than in Western Europe and forty times that of Japan.[9] We are number one per capita in drug consumption and prison population; number one in financial bailouts, trade imbalances, budget deficits, and national debt. Our national debt of almost $5 trillion by 1993 (the money owed by the U.S. government to financial institutions and rich investors to be paid by taxing the earnings of the people) is larger than the national debts of all Third World nations combined.

The United States is number one in managers per employees. Japan, with its more rapid industrial expansion, has less than one-third the number of managers per employees.[10] In other words, while the leaders of U.S. industry complain about bloated government, they themselves populate top-heavy corporate bureaucracies. This country is also number one in executive salaries and income inequality. Average remuneration of chief executive officers (CEOs) is anywhere from two to six times higher than CEOs abroad and twenty-five times more than the average American worker.[11] And the trend continues in that direction: between 1988 and 1992, the U.S. national debt increased by 57 percent; budget deficits climbed 157 percent; long-term unemployment increased 133 percent; the number of millionaires was up 81 percent; violent crime grew 21 percent and the prison population 28 percent.[12]

President Reagan once exclaimed, "We love America because America is the greatest." This view implies that if America were not so great, we would not find it so lovable. Our love seems predicated on the country's being bigger and stronger than other nations. What then of peoples who inhabit lesser lands? Can citizens of Luxembourg love their country? Luxembourg can never aspire to be number one. In fact, it must be about number 123, not far ahead of San Marino in the greatness of its military might. Do people from Luxembourg walk about shamefaced because they rank so low? Do they try to pass themselves off as French? When asked if they love their country, do they mumble: "What's there to love? A few border police, no air force, no navy."

BULLY THRILLS AND INVERTED MORALITY

War is often the greatest incitement to state idolatry, especially when people think they are going to win easily. Reflecting on the war fever she observed in Paris on the eve of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, an American woman wrote: "The war, the war, there is no other topic. Utter strangers would stop to discuss the situation. The confidence in the generals and the army was immense. It was to be one long but straight march to Berhn; not a soul doubted it. ... I shall never forget the excitement." Thousands crowded the Place de la Concorde nightly, indulging in frenzied dancing. Boulevard windows were thick with flags. And anyone who dared question the wisdom of the war was jeered as a "Prussian spy" and chased.[13] The chauvinist ardor cooled precipitously when the war brought a disastrous defeat to France.

Like all bullies, the superpatriots are at their best when picking on someone much smaller and weaker. They like, wars that are one-sided slaughters, easy victories with lots of enemy casualties and few American ones. The quick success of such conflicts wins wide support. The super-patriots were exhilarated by the U.S. aggressions perpetuated against Grenada, Panama, and Iraq. Ronald Reagan, the Conqueror of Grenada, reflecting upon his great military victory, hailed the venture as an example of how the U.S. defends democracy. In fact, Grenada's unemployment rate has quadrupled since it was "liberated" by Mr. Reagan. Grenada's native enterprises and development projects and the health and educational programs initiated by

the revolutionary New Jewel movement were wiped out. Grenada was again safe for free-market private-capital penetration. The Reagan invasion served notice to the Caribbean nations that they had better not try to develop alternate social orders that go against the multinational corporate way of doing things.

The same story can be told about Panama. The 1989 U.S. invasion brought a sharp increase in unemployment, homelessness, economic misery, crime, drugs, and government corruption.[14] Nothing was gained except the deaths of several thousand Panamanians, continued U.S. occupation and political repression, and a boost in the opinion polls for President Bush. So with the war against Iraq, a country that once had the best minimum standard of living in the Middle East. The U.S. bombings brought cholera and typhoid epidemics in their wake, a destroyed technological base, a devastated agriculture, the misery and tragedy of over two hundred thousand Iraqi deaths.[15]

Most superpatriots have given little thought to the welfare of Grenada, Panama, or Iraq, nor do U.S. leaders encourage them to do so. They were too busy getting a vicarious thrill from the spectacle of the most powerful nation in the world stomping on vastly smaller and weaker countries. Those of us less enamored by deadly military force perceive such ventures not as a sign of strength but of weakness, a shamefully bullying act of moral bankruptcy.[16] A people in touch with the deeper values of social justice and democracy don't get a number-one thrill from stomping on tiny nations.

For all their militarism, American superpatriots dislike difficult, costly wars, such as the one in Vietnam. Here was a smaller country but one still strong enough to inflict heavy casualties on U.S. forces and endure protracted punishment. The superpatriots complain that we fought in Vietnam with one hand tied behind our backs, exercising too much restraint —despite the fact that the United States dropped more bombs on Indochina than fell in all of World War II, leaving one million Indochinese dead, maimed, or missing.

Superpatriotic morality is an inversion of individual morality. The nation-state is transformed into something more than an instrumental value whose

function is to protect other social values. For the superpatriot, the nation becomes an end in itself, a powerfully abstracted symbol that claims our ultimate loyalty, an entity whose existence is taken as morally self-justifying. The ethical code applied to nationalism does not operate the same as the one applied to individuals. Individual morality calls for self-restraint and even self-sacrifice. There are certain things one should not do (as in "thou shalt not") even if one has the impulse and even if it advances one's self-interest. But these premises are inverted when applied to a nation's behavior. Individual morality is predicated on the realization that sin (i.e., unjust and harmful behavior toward others) is always within the human potential. To err is human, to sin is all too human. But the nation-state is something more than human—and therein lies the power of its appeal. The nation's existence and its action are so endowed with virtue as to place it above the commonplace rules of life. The restraints that apply to ordinary humans do not restrain the nation. As a kind of supreme entity, the nation knows no restraint other than the limitations of its own desires and power. Hence, the most ruthless violence—outrageous to individual morality and unsupportable in civil life—is applauded as heroism when performed in the name of the nation.[17] "Thou shalt not" becomes "thou shalt do anything by whatever means necessary if it can be said to be in the national interest." The willingness to kill other human beings in combat is not only treated as morally acceptable, it becomes a measure of one's patriotism.

SUPERPATRIOTISM AS AN IMPERIAL PRODUCT

Superpatriots can be found in high and not so high places, in the White House and in the local American Legion Post. Superpatriotism is a bedfellow of machismo, especially during its more martial moments. Benito Mussolini, the founder of that most militaristic and repressive form of superpatriotism, fascism, summed it up when he said a man must be "a husband, a father and a soldier." One U.S. Air Force captain, reminiscing about his bombing attacks against the peasant population of Vietnam, made an explicit connection between high-tech war, machismo, mindless patriotism, and inverted morality:

> Flying a fighter plane is magical. It's a macho thing, maybe—an extension of your manhood. You do it, concentrate on it, and under the circumstances it was damn hard for me to get worried about the political implications of the war. It was a chance for us to show our military power. We're basically patriotic, conservative people. And we're blameless.[18]

Although it instigates and harnesses macho impulses, superpatriotism cannot be reduced entirely to machismo, for that does not explain the way it is directed toward politically specific targets, toward countries that attempt to assert an independent course in economic self-development, cutting into the investment prerogatives of global capitalism. Be it a social democratic coalition government as with Allende in Chile and Arbenz in Guatemala, or a populist nationalist one like Panama under Noriega and Iran under Mossadegh, or a Christian socialist government like Nicaragua under the Sandinistas, or a Marxist-Leninist government as in Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam, or a revolutionary Islamic state as Qaddafi's Libya, or even a right-wing nationalist government as Iraq under Saddam Hussein, all have had one thing in common: a desire to reclaim some portion of the land, natural resources, capital, labor, and markets that have been preempted by giant foreign corporations, thereby seriously infringing upon the class interests of wealthy investors.

U.S. leaders are less critical of democracy's mortal enemies than of capitalism's democratic opponents. Toward repressive but capitalist U.S. client-state countries like Chile (after the overthrow of Allende), Guatemala, El Salvador, Indonesia, South Africa, Israel, South Korea, Haiti, Pakistan, and Zaire, ones that support the interests of multinational capitalism and imperialism—U.S. superpatriotic leaders are surprisingly accommodating, supportive, nurturing, passive, and forgiving—very unmacho. Psychologistic categories in politics may offer some explanation about predispositional sets but they do not explain actual policy directions.

We have been taught to think of macho characters like Joe Redneck, Tony Hardhat, and Archie Bunker as the superpatriotic prototypes. In fact, they are not its progenitors but its consumers and victims. They pay the taxes that support a U.S. global military empire, and they and their children must fight the superpatriotic wars. The conscious suppliers and pushers of

superpatriotism are our top political leaders, publicists, media pundits, and institutional heads, including corporate bosses.

Superpatriotic ideology is assiduously propagated by the politico-economic leaders of this society. Like the anticommunist ideology, superpatriotism is not a product of mass hysteria, although its goal is often to instigate mass hysteria. There have been no spontaneous patriotic demonstrations demanding that we go to war against this or that country. Support comes only after the White House, the media, and other elite propagandists create massive public-relations campaigns that demonize foreign leaders, portraying them as mortal threats, and only after troops are committed and an easy victory seems to be in the offing. Far from being reluctantly propelled into hostilities by popular war fever, leaders incite that fever in order to gather support for their war policies. Thereby do they attempt to distract the public from pressing domestic matters, serve the overseas interests of U.S. investors, justify gargantuan military budgets, and present themselves as great leaders.

Patriotic extremism is an important tool in the hands of affluent rulers, who use it to mask class privileges and mute class conflict—by characterizing as unpatriotic any kind of radical criticism and working-class militancy. In 1886, during a time of labor unrest, Theodore Roosevelt talked of setting worker against worker in the name of patriotism: "My men are hard-working laboring men, who work longer hours for no greater wages than most of the strikers; but they are Americans through and through. I believe nothing would give them greater pleasure than a chance with rifles at one of the mobs."[10] During the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany, and Japan, "patriotic" goon squads, composed of reactionary veterans and other hypernationalists, were used repeatedly to smash workers' and tenants' strikes, labor unions, and liberal publications.[20]

Leaders will always represent their class agendas as being in the national interest. When President Reagan proposed to abolish the progressive income tax and President Bush, a few years later, called for a cut in the capital gains tax, moves designed to ease the tax burdens of the very rich by tens of billions of dollars each year, they respectively presented these "reforms" as beneficial to America and its entire populace. We are made to

believe that we the people have a patriotic community of interest with the giant multinationals, the very corporations that might anytime export our industries and jobs in pursuit of cheaper labor markets abroad. On almost every issue, there is no community of interests between the few and the many. Policy costs are not equally shared and benefits not equally enjoyed.

Seeing what is done in the name of patriotism, many on the Left—especially during the Vietnam era—attacked the patriotic symbols of our country. They mistakenly put the blame on an entity called America, and spelled it "Amerika" and even "Amerikkka." They burned American flags, thereby convincing millions of our compatriots that they were either maniacs or traitors. They mistakenly blamed the nation for what was being done in its name in Vietnam and elsewhere by coteries of imperialists and militarists. In doing so, they played directly into the hands of leaders who gladly equated their own war policies with America itself. Those who criticized their policies were accused of attacking America. And by burning American flags and denouncing "Amerikkka," they lent confirmation to that false equation.

During the 1960s, the anarchist tendencies of the New Left added fuel to the superpatriotic bonfire. Anarchists see the state as the enemy, rather than the elitist policies and class interests of most states. In a way, anarchists are a mirror image of superpatriots. They elevate the state to an entity that has a moral existence of its own—one that is supremely evil as opposed to the superpatriot's supremely virtuous state. And when they attack the symbols of the state, they play right into the hands of leaders who have always sought to treat ruling-class interests as tantamount to the national interest.

To this day, political leaders continue to wrap themselves in the flag, conveniently branding all opposition to their policies as attacks against the nation itself. Critics of conservative, nationalistic policies are labeled the "Hate America" crowd. In the 1992 electoral campaign, Bush responded to Clinton's criticisms of the recession as follows: "My opponent says America is a nation in decline. ... Well, don't let anyone tell you that America is second-rate, especially someone running for president."[21] Thus he misrepresented criticisms of his administration's economic policies as an attack on America itself.

The slogan, "America—Love It or Leave It," presumes that our national institutions, practices, and leadership are above criticism; they are perfect as is. But no human society in history can make such a claim. The slogan reveals the superpatriot's intolerance of anyone who tries to act like a responsible, democratic citizen exercising critical judgment about social conditions. Those who see some serious problems with the U.S. economy, culture, and environment are advised to follow the "American way," by persons who seem to forget that the American way is to criticize and debate openly, not just accept things as they are. We are told to be grateful that we have the right—unlike in many other countries—to criticize the government. Presumably, we should appreciate our freedom to dissent but not dare use it.

REAL PATRIOTISM

In contrast to the superpatriots, there are the real patriots who love their country enough to want to improve it. Their patriotism has a social content. They know that democracy is not just the ability to hold elections but to serve and fulfill the basic needs and interests of the demos, the people. Real patriots educate themselves about the real history of their country and are not satisfied with the flag-waving promotional fluff that passes for history. They find different things in our past to be proud of than do superpatriots, such as the struggle for universal enfranchisement, the Abolitionist movement, the peace movement, the elimination of child labor, the struggle for collective bargaining, for the eight-hour day, for occupational safety, for racial justice and gender equality. In the real patriots pantheon can be found Tom Paine, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Mark Twain, Susan B. Anthony, Mother Jones, Big Bill Haywood, John Reed, Eugene Victor Debs, Elizabeth Gurly Flynn, Jeanette Rankin, Paul Robeson, A. J. Muste, Harry Bridges, Walter Reuther, Martin Luther King, Jr.—and the millions in the ranks who brought forth these kinds of leaders.

Real patriots struggle for fundamental social change. They want to tax the rich, not low-income working people, and they want to eliminate the extremes between very rich and very poor. They want to restructure the use of energy and transportation in order to save our country and the planet on which it exists. In contrast to the profit-oriented conservative superpatriots

who repeatedly profess their love for this "land" called America but seem unconcerned about its forests, rivers, wildlife, wetlands, water supplies, and overall ecological health, the real patriot puts environmental concerns before everything else. Without a livable ecology nothing else will survive. Real patriots also advocate more struggle against racism and sexism in all spheres of life.

Real patriots advocate freedom of speech and freedom of ideas in the major media, a kind that would include dissident left views as well as the usual hard-line right wing and conventional centrist opinions. Patriots want relief from the evasive, fatuous, mealymouthed, know-it-all anti-communist media pundits and conservative columnists. They want discussion of worker-controlled enterprises and public ownership. They want a national debate on the oppressive, unjust purposes of U.S. foreign policy in the Third World and elsewhere. They want to reclaim the nation's airwaves, which are part of the public domain and belong not to the network bosses but to the people of the United States.

Some real patriots want a government that will go directly into not-for-profit production. If private industry cannot provide for the needs of the people, cannot build homes and hospitals enough for all, then the public sector should do so—not by contracting it out to private profiteers but by direct production, as during the New Deal, when public workers did all sorts of necessary work. They made tents, cots, and shoes, and canned foods for the destitute; not-for-profit production that created jobs, served human needs, and expanded private income and the tax base.

Real patriots want to open up our political system to new political parties, not just two capitalist anticommunist parties; not just one party that red-baits and liberal-baits and the other that lives in fear of being red-baited and liberal-baited. We need to do what revolutionary Nicaragua did and institute proportional representation, easy ballot access for dissident parties, convenient voter-registration conditions, public campaign funding, and free TV time for minority parties.[22]

Real patriots want the fundamental democratization of the political process and the economy of this country. They say, along with Albert Camus, that they want to be able to love their country and justice too. In fact, the only

way one can be a real patriot is to love justice. A real patriot is not afraid of dramatic and fundamental changes—if they are in a democratic direction. As Mark Twain put it more than a century ago:

> You see my kind of loyalty was loyalty to one's country, not to its institutions or its officeholders. ... I was from Connecticut, whose Constitution declares "that all political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their benefit; and that they have at all times an undeniable and indefeasible right to *alter their form of government* in such a manner as they may think expedient."[23] [italics in the original]

Finally, real patriots are also internationalists. They feel a special attachment to their own country but not in some competitive way that pits the United States against other powers. They love the people of all nations, seeing them as different representations of the same human family. In 1936, individuals from many countries and all walks of life joined together to form the International Brigade, which fought in Spain to protect democracy from the fascist forces of Generalissimo Franco. Charles Nusser, a veteran of that great struggle, relates this incident of "international patriotism":

> Sam Gonshak and I, both Spanish Civil War veterans, were in Guernica on June 1, 1985, not long after President Reagan's infamous visit to the Bitburg cemetery. We were there to lay a wreath at the historic Tree of Guernica. I spoke briefly, saying there are those who lay their wreaths on the graves of the Nazi criminals [an allusion to President Reagan's visit to Bitberg cemetery in Germany], but that we veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade pay our homage at the Tree of Freedom in loving memory of the *victims* of the fascist murderers.
>
> I will never forget the speech of the organizer of the gathering. He referred to Sam and me as "Patriots of the World." Not patriots of the United States but "Patriots of the World." There have always been too many patriots in various countries straining to get at the throats of patriots in other countries." [italics in the original]

"Patriots of the World" who happen to live in the United States want to stop destroying others with jet bombers and missiles and U.S.-financed death squads and start healing this nation. This is not just a good and noble ideal, it is a historical necessity. Sooner or later Americans rediscover that they cannot live on flag-waving alone. They begin to drift off into reality, confronted by the economic irrationalities and injustices of a system that

provides them with the endless circuses and extravaganzas of superpatriotism, while denying many of them the bread of prosperity and their birthright as democratic citizens.

CHAPTER 4: The Politics of Religiosity

Since time immemorial, human beings have sought relief from the ravages of outrageous fortune and the brutish uncertainties of an unaccommodating world. Keenly aware of their vulnerability to natural catastrophes, to injury, infirmity, and inevitable mortality, and often heartlessly victimized by other humans, they have fashioned and beseeched gods to bring them respite from misery, save them from disaster and death, and wreak vengeance upon their enemies.

This does not mean all religious experience is but a compensation for human travail. There are other reasons people have looked to the heavens. Our intelligence invites us to ponder the nature of cosmic existence, to be awed by the miracle of life itself and the boundless wonders of the universe. On questions of cosmology, physics begins to sound like metaphysics, as mysteries are confronted that once were the exclusive province of religion. Did the universe have a beginning? Where does it come from? What is its ultimate fate? How are we attached to it? Why does life evolve from simple to more complex forms? Is there some purpose or design?

Perhaps Hegel is right. In the beginning there was the world spirit, the Weltgeist, which moved in unconscious creation, bringing forth cosmic energy that eventually objectified itself in the form of matter. From matter there evolved conscious matter, in the form of life, and from conscious life came self-consciousness—the ability of consciousness to reflect upon its own nature—which is a distinct property of human beings. What a remarkable thing is the universe that it would engage in this process of self-realizing (in both senses of that word) its own existence, a universe that creates "a part of itself to study the rest of it."[1]

To most materialists, questions about the existence of God are valueless. To believers they are self-evident. To others they remain unsettled. We should not attack all religion as illusion nor dismiss all metaphysics as being nothing more than a physics whose time has not yet come. To do so is to impose a confinement on our minds, inhibiting us from pondering the great mysteries of existence.

There are two traditions in Western theism. There is the God of rational totality, immutable and cosmic, pure creative force, yet impersonal and without deliberate demands. Then there is Yahweh, the Lord God Jehovah, of Biblical tradition, who acts directly and anthropomorphically upon history with moods of love and rage.[2] It is the latter who is easily turned into parody by the opportunists who transform religion into religiosity. By "religiosity" I mean the sanctimonious posturing of those who conjure up images of God as the Almighty Egoist, Material Benefactor and Money Provider, Punisher of Personal Impiety, Misogynist Patriarch, Political Partisan, Winner of Wars, and Defender of Privilege and the Status Quo. In this chapter the quarrel is not with the quests of religious believers, but with the way politicians use religiosity for purposes of state idolatry and the way religionists use both politics and religion to serve themselves.

GOTT MIT UNS: DIVINE POLITICOS

There are no more enduring practitioners of religiosity than American politicians, especially conservative ones. Again and again they enlist the deity in support of their particular political agendas, and associate themselves with prominent clergy and religious symbols.[3] President Bush ended every major speech with "God bless the United States of America."

Foremost among those who have used their high office to inject religiosity into political life was President Ronald Reagan. He entered into conversations with right-wing fundamentalists regarding Bible prophesies about an imminent apocalypse that involved the destruction of the Antichrist forces of Russia in a final nuclear conflagration, from which Christ would return triumphant."[4] God, it seems, was a cold-war militarist who was preparing us for a final nuclear showdown. Worse still, one of God's apocalyptic agents sat in the White House. It was said of Reagan that he frightened not only the Russians but many Americans too.

President Reagan announced that the United States "is a Christian nation"—which must have come as unsettling news to a loyal citizenry, including millions of Jews, Hindus, Moslems, Buddhists, atheists, agnostics, skeptics, and nonsectarian deists. In a mawkishly staged moment of his 1987 State of the Union message, he cast his eyes upward and proclaimed that our nation

pays homage "to *Him*," and "could not have been created without divine guidance."[5] (God is not just Our Father, he is a Founding Father.)

In fact, the founders of this nation harbored rather critical views about religion, and were quite explicit that the Republic was not founded on Christianity. Jefferson noted that "millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned." He bemoaned "monkish ignorance and superstition" and "the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who ... hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world."[6] James Madison wrote, "Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind, and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect."[7] The delegates to the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 left the deity very much out of the Constitution, even refusing to follow Benjamin Franklin's suggestion that their daily sessions be opened with a prayer asking for divine guidance.[8]

The Constitution makes clear that ours is not a Christian nation. Article VI reads, "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States," a feature that represented a distinct advance over a number of state constitutions that banned Roman Catholics, Jews, and nonbelievers from holding office. Edmund Randolph of Virginia, who had been a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention, noted that the absence of a religious qualification "puts all sects on the same footing. A man of abilities and character, of any sect whatever, may be admitted to any office or public trust under the United States." Randolph was glad there were a "variety of sects, because they keep one another in order. ... [T]hey will prevent the establishment of any one sect in prejudice to the rest, and will forever oppose all attempts to infringe religious liberty."[9] Jefferson, Madison, Washington, and other leaders also looked favorably upon religious pluralism. George Washington maintained that "every man" should be free to worship "according to the dictates of his own conscience."[10]

During the early years of the Republic, another great democratic victory came with the passage of the First Amendment, which in part states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or

prohibiting the free exercise thereof ..." Church and state were to be kept separate; the government could neither inhibit nor act as an agency in support of any religious organization. Yet in the 1980s and early 1990s, the Reagan and Bush administrations moved backward toward theocracy by advocating the use of public funds to subsidize religious schools. They supported a move to amend the Constitution to allow teacher-led prayer sessions in public schools. As conservatives, they recognized that state idolatry was anchored in part on religiosity, even in a supposedly secular state.

The abortion issue provides an example of how rightist politicians use religiosity in pursuit of political gain. In the late 1960s, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and other conservative leaders *supported* a woman's right to safe and legal abortion. Conservatives had long maintained that the poor produced too many babies; more abortions would mean less children on welfare. But conservatives also cast about for noneconomic issues that cut across class lines, such as school prayers, homophobia, sexism, pornography in the arts, racism, affirmative action, family values, and fear of crime, issues that might win support from modest-income voters who would otherwise have no common cause with the Right. When they discovered that working-class Roman Catholic and fundamentalist Protestant votes could be gleaned on the abortion issue, rightist politicians soon became supporters of compulsory pregnancy, in what was one of the most dramatic flip-flops of modern American politics.

The opportunism of this stance was made evident in August 1992, when President Bush admitted he would "stand by" his granddaughter if she opted to abort an unwanted pregnancy. In the end, the president said, the decision would have to be hers: "Who else—who else's could it be?"[12] Similar sentiments were voiced by Vice President Quayle regarding his daughter. Thus the Bush-Quayle commitment to compulsory pregnancy was a vote-getting public posture, not a profound moral conviction as they had maintained. It did not extend to their own loved ones who, unlike other women in the country, would retain the right to choose.

Wars and election campaigns evoke cloying expressions of religiosity from political leaders. In an appearance at the Southern Baptist Convention in

1991, President Bush grew visibly tearful as he spoke about praying to God before he ordered the attacks that massacred Iraqi conscripts and civilians during the Persian Gulf war. During the 1992 presidential campaign. Bush cited Jesus Christ as the moral force behind his military interventionism, claiming that during the Persian Gulf war "America, as Christ ordained" was "a light unto the world."[13] The 1992 Republican National Convention saw a resurgent religious Right insert references to God and America's " Judeo-Christian" heritage in the GOP platform, along with "family values" and "traditional morality" and a strong plank against legalized abortion. Speakers at the convention claimed that Republicans had higher moral standards and were closer to God than Democrats. President Bush denounced the Democratic party's platform for omitting any mention of God.[14]

In critical response, the National Council of Churches stated that it was "blasphemy" to make "partisan use of God's name" and "assert the moral superiority of one people over another or one political party over another." The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs announced, "We begin with the proposition that God is neither Democrat nor Republican nor, for that matter, American. God transcends all national and political affiliations."[15] Sometimes the blatant use of religiosity by politicians proves too much even for some of the[religious.

OBEY AND FORGIVE

Religious leaders who are closely allied to the Right tend to be the most theologically conservative. They evade social issues such as poverty, oppression, and militarism, and focus on personal pieties, sectarian intolerance, and a prudish moralism. Their individualistic subjectivism resembles that of the New Age gurus discussed in chapter 2. It goes something like this: "Your ills and sins are your own doing, a matter of your inner soul and personal piety; stop feehng sorry for yourself; learn humility and look to the saintly ones who show patience when facing personal adversity; harbor no anger or envy in your heart; love and serve God and you will be rewarded." Sin and virtue are defined as private matters unrelated to economic issues. Thus a worker who filches something from the business firm is guilty of theft, but the firm owners who grow rich off

the underpaid labor of workers are not considered thieves. Government policy that tolerates "pornography" in art and literature is sinful, while government policy that pursues wars of aggression and favors the rich over the poor is not.[16] Virtue is a matter of loving and obeying God, rather than advancing the collective human condition. If anything, a concern for the latter is itself a sinful manifestation of "secular humanism," putting man rather than God at the center of our concerns.

Not surprisingly, religious conservatives win generous financial support from rich donors and corporations. With such backing, they are able to launch media crusades that give them access to mass contributions.[17] What comes across in their sermons is how removed they are from the great questions about God, existence, and the cosmos. The God they sell is made in their own shallow image, involved in their immediate political agendas. Televangelist Pat Robertson, sometimes candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, revealed something about his religio-political mentality when he praised the "enlightened leadership" of Guatemalan military dictator General Efrain Rios Montt, notorious for his slaughter of as many as 10,000 Guatemalans.[18] In the summer of 1992, Robertson asserted that feminism "encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians."[19] That same year, Robertson and his Christian Broadcasting Network came up with $6 million and bought the UPI wire service, giving him a greater opportunity to inject his political conservatism and religiosity into the media world."[20]

In various state and local electoral contests, conservative religious leaders have run for public office or publicly associated themselves with right-wing candidates. Baptist minister Everett Sileven finished fourth in the GOP gubernatorial primary in Nebraska in 1986. The victor was a woman; she ran for governor against a Democratic candidate who was also female. This was too much for sore-loser Sileven, who denounced the contest: "Jeremiah plainly tells us that when the people of a nation are willing to accept the leadership of a woman it is a sure sign of God's curse."[21] I could not find that message in Jeremiah.

One media-fabricated saint, held up for public admiration, is Mother Teresa, a nun who goes among the sick to bring them God's message. When her plane skidded off a runway in 1986, killing five of her admirers and maiming others, she said, "This was the will of God." It seems God is as whimsically homicidal as Caligula or any other mad despot. Like most religious personalities. Mother Teresa remains steadfastly unconcerned about the destructive effects of economic power, preferring to direct her admonitions at the victims of injustice rather than the perpetrators. When a Union Carbide plant spewed lethal pesticides over Bhopal, India, in what was history's worst industrial accident, killing or seriously injuring many thousands of people, she appeared on the scene, walking among those who suffered agonizing burns in their eyes and lungs, telling them over and over again, "forgive, forgive."[22] The hapless victims were to forgive rather than fight Union Carbide—despite the death and ruination that the criminally negligent company had delivered upon them and their communities. Suffering none of the horrors of the accident. Mother Teresa was able to counsel an admirable charity of spirit to those who did.[23]

The prevalence of this brand of religious consciousness is testimony to the way that oppressive conditions help generate oppressive consciousness. History demonstrates that people sometimes will struggle against oppression but other times will try to accommodate themselves to it in a variety of ways, one of which is to fashion religious myths that help them mask their wretched lot and promise them something better in the next world. Alexandre Dumas, *fils,* once said that if God had to endure the kind of misery that humans are subjected to, he would kill himself. Indeed, the world is its own indictment against God's creative efforts, complete with tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, famine, sickness, pain, death—and homo sapiens who have the capacity and inclination to perpetuate the most horrid atrocities and evils upon each other. These same humans are said to be God's highest creation. Do not blame man's sins upon God, we are told. Humans *choose* of their own free will to commit evil. But why would an omnipotent, omniscient, all-loving deity create such imperfect creatures, endowed with the capacity and inclination to act in the frequently dreadful ways they do? Yahweh should have taken more than six days to create the world; it is a botched job. I would have to agree with the wit who concluded, "Maybe God does exist but he's an underachiever."

SELLING GOD—FOR A PRICE

Religionists say they are "antimaterialist." But we ought to distinguish between two kinds of materialism. There is philosophical materialism, which maintains that ideas do not exist as disembodied entities apart from material reality. Too often, notes the philosophical materialist Karl Marx, "The products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own."[24] Of course, religionists, by definition, are not philosophical materialists; they are very much inclined to treating the images of their religious thought as autonomous figures.

But the word "materialism" is used also to mean consumerism, material accumulation, and possession, what might be called acquisitive materialism. As noted in chapter 2, many supposedly spiritual organizations are much dedicated to acquisitive materialism. Their leaders preach "pie in the sky, bye and bye" to their congregations, but themselves live high off the hog here and now. This is especially true of the televangelists who have been presiding over lucrative TV ministries that are often implicated in ethically and legally questionable practices. Consider the following:

Item. After trying for four years to get financial information from Billy Graham's Evangelistic Association, the Council of Better Business Bureaus placed the organization on its list of groups that did not meet proper standards of charitable solicitation. Others on the list included the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, Children of God, Reverend Moon's Unification Church, and the Universal Life Church.[25] Billy Graham was asked to explain how his organization could accumulate a $23 million fund without the knowledge of the vast majority of his contributors. He never did explain."[26]

Item. In 1987 it was revealed that right-wing TV preacher Jerry Falwell, head of the "Moral Majority," had transferred over $6.7 million from his political organizations to his religious ministries, without the knowledge of contributors. A religious corporation and a political action committee run by Falwell were fined $6,000 for a series of illegal transactions between the two.[27] Falwell owed the municipality of Lynchburg, Virginia, $1.4 million

in back taxes. When he threatened to move his enterprises from Lynchburg, the city council forgave the tax bill.[28]

Item. The PTL television ministry collected $129 million in 1986 from its followers. But the following year, accountants found that $92 million in church money was missing, along with records detailing millions of dollars in expenditures. PTL head Jim Bakker and his wife Tammy pocketed a total of $4.8 million in salary and bonuses from the organization over a three-year period and lived in opulence on an estate that provided every luxury, from gold-plated bathroom faucets to an air-conditioned doghouse. As Bakker explained, "We preach the abundant life."[29] In 1989, he was sent to prison after being convicted of twenty-four fraud and conspiracy counts, including diverting millions of dollars of contributors' money to his personal use.[30]

Item. In 1987, television preacher Oral Roberts said the Almighty would take his life unless his supporters came across with $8.3 million for "missionary scholarships." (It seems God is an extortionist and a murderer.) In 1986, Roberts had claimed he would die by that year's end if he did not raise that sum. In truth, he did not need the money for "scholarships," but to rescue his financial empire. God was not after him; the bankers were. In April 1987, Roberts informed his followers that he had been spared because they had donated over $8 million, but the Lord told him they "must continue" to raise that amount every year. In 1989, facing a $25 million deficit, Roberts announced he would sell his hospital, medical school, and other assets because of declining contributions.[31] Contrary to earlier expectations, God did not kill him.

Item. On his television show, preacher W. V. Grant, who claimed to be a faith healer, used fraudulent and artful deceptions to "cure" people who in fact were not cured or were never disabled. He collected $6 million a year from poor, sick, and desperate followers, while falsely claiming to be supporting "sixty-four orphanages in Haiti." Grant lived in great luxury and owned high-priced Ferraris and Mercedes.[32]

Item. Televangelist Robert Tilton took in more money than Madonna and Michael Jackson combined, some $80 million a year, tax free. He lived in a

$4.5 million home, paid for in cash, had another house in Florida, a luxury boat, and an additional $60 million in bank deposits, treasury bonds, and real estate—and those were only the assets he listed. Tilton claimed to have helped orphanages that in fact did not exist."[33] He promised miracles to the needy who managed to send in contributions: "If you want to get rid of that dump you live in, that car that breaks down, you have to have faith. I've been supernaturally blessed by God to help. ... Yes, the Lord's ministry gets a portion of it [pointing to himself] but you get most of it."[34] Tilton himself did not trust in God for miracles, preferring to get his money the old-fashioned way—from other people.

Fraud can be committed in nonmonetary ways. After repeatedly lambasting the sinful sexual morals of society, televangelist Jimmy Swaggert was himself revealed to have regularly patronized a prostitute. According to her, he urged her (unsuccessfully) to make her twelve-year-old daughter available.[35] Three years later Swaggert was caught soliciting sex from another prostitute. He was forced to step down from his ministry but announced that God wanted him to return.[36] Jim Bakker had sexual relations with Jessica Hahn and was also linked to homosexual acts, while preaching quite a different message to his followers.[27]

What transpires in the televangelist's snake-oil, money-grabbing forays matches anything from the Dark Ages. Robert Tilton does his version of glossolalia. Closing his eyes and extending his hands upward, he babbles a gibberish that supposedly elicits a miracle-working communication with the deity. Jimmy Swaggart once paused in the middle of a frothy sermon, put his hand to his forehead and said, "Hold on, God is telling me something," after which he conveyed the celestial message to his audience, none of whom rolled over laughing. (On television, God communicates only with the select few, never audibly with entire audiences.) In a television appearance during his financial crisis. Oral Roberts said "when the money stopped coming in, Satan appeared." His wife, who was on the program with him, chimed in smartly: "Yes, but I said to Satan: 'You just get yourself away from my husband, Satan. Go on away.' And Satan ran away." The image of this plucky little woman standing up to the Prince of Darkness, possibly with rolling pin in hand, moved the credulous audience to applause.

We know from reading the Bible that Yahweh can be a vainglorious, homicidally jealous, and vindictive deity. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and all the unoffending children and adults therein because he did not like the life-style of some of the inhabitants in those towns.[38] Televangelism's God has the same mean-spirited prudery and violent nationalism as the Old Testament Yahweh, but with none of the latter's awesome grandeur. The TV preacher's God allocates success, wealth, good fortune, and good health as is befitting a deity fashioned for a money-oriented consumer society.

CLASS RELIGION

Irrespective of the differences that occasionally arose between them, church and state colluded for centuries to protect each other's privileges and properties against the competing demands of the populace. We need only think of the Middle Ages, when the power of prince and state were mobilized by church inquisitors to hunt heretics, burn witches, and expropriate the properties of innocent victims.[39] By promising the common people everything in the next world, prince and bishop could live lavishly off their labor in this world. "The mortgage that the peasant has on heavenly possessions," Marx noted, "guarantees the mortgage that the bourgeois has on peasant possessions."[40]

One example from many that history offers is Martin Luther, known to us as the rebel who challenged Rome and started the Protestant Reformation. But there is a lesser-known Luther, the defender of aristocratic authority. In 1525, a few years after the dispute with Rome, the German peasants openly rebelled against the misery and exploitation they suffered at the hands of the nobility and the clergy, going so far as to plunder castles and monasteries and set up political communities of their own. Even Frederick the Wise, Luther's own prince, said, "Perhaps the poor people have been given a reason for such rebellion. ... In many ways the poor are being burdened by us temporal and spiritual rulers."[41]

Not so in Luther's eyes. On a few rare occasions he did chastise the nobility for the profligate way they lived off the backs of the peasants, but he never seriously confronted them. Nor did he show any special interest in the

peasantry—until they rose in rebellion. When the peasants quoted scripture to justify their struggle against ruinous rents and taxes and the nobility's theft of their land, Luther considered it a "blasphemy" and angrily denounced them for turning "everything upside down, like the worse disaster." He had a simple enough syllogism: the peasant uprising was against authority; all authority came from God; ergo, the peasants were pitting themselves against God (not against corrupt and exploitative princes). He repeatedly urged "everyone who can" to "smite, slay, and stab [the peasants] secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous hurtful, or devilish than a rebel. It is just as when one must kill a mad dog. ..."To justify his call to butchery, he quoted passages from the Bible."[42] The princes' armies slaughtered 100,000 peasants. (A fairly accurate estimate, historians agree.) Luther, the great spokesman for the God of Love, led the call for the homicidal bloodletting of a repressive class war.

Throughout feudal times and into the modern era, church structure reflected class structure. During the ancien regime in France, the upper clergy was recruited almost exclusively from the nobility, who drew lavish incomes from their bishoprics and other church offices. Additional sinecures and collegiate chapters went to needy nobility. The incomes drawn from these positions would have greatly improved living conditions within many dioceses. The parish priest, who tended to the common people, lived in poverty and was invariably of humble origin. The upper clergy looked down on the priests as "coarse, dirty, and ignorant." The lower clergy, in turn, seethed over the unjust tithe system, and the corruption, opulence, and arrogance of their superiors.[43]

In the two centuries that followed the French Revolution, most Protestant and Catholic church leaders in Europe and North America approved of the business community's views on property and economic inequality. Labor unions, strikes, minimum wage laws, and other reforms were denounced as interferences with "natural law." Syndicalism, anarchism, communism, and socialism were condemned as the devil's work.[44] Sin was defined in personal terms, a failure to restrain pleasurable impulses and other self-indulgences, an infection of the soul arising from flawed spiritual development rather than from damaging social conditions. Religion was

used to teach workers the virtues of hard work, punctuality, and compliance to managerial authority. In 1828, mill women in Dover, New Hampshire, went on strike against factory rules that charged fines for tardiness, forbade talking on the job, and required church attendance.[45]

Religion had little effect in softening the practices of capitalists, even the more religious ones. Marx tells of mill owners who on one occasion worked young boys for thirty hours straight, in a dense atmosphere of dust and wool shreds, allowing only one hour of sleep during that entire spell. When brought before the magistrate, the accused gentlemen, being Quakers, scrupulously "affirmed" rather than took an oath. They testified about their great compassion for the boys and how they had allowed them four hours of sleep, "but the obstinate children absolutely would not go to bed." The devout gentlemen were fined the crushing sum of twenty pounds."[46]

The collusion between state and church in the defense of economic privilege and ideological monopoly continues to this day. Sometimes the state uses religion to legitimate its own exploits, and sometimes the religionists use the state to advance their interests.[47] Today, major religious organizations and television ministries hold billions of dollars in investments in armaments, agribusiness, banking, insurance, pharmaceuticals, media, utilities and just about every other enterprise.[48] If religious organizations tend to be conservative, it is not only because they depend on wealthy contributors but because they themselves partake directly in the ownership of wealth.

Religious organizations possess a vast array of properties and enterprises that are treated as tax free by state, federal, and local governments. Such exemptions oblige the rest of us to carry a larger portion of the tax burden. In effect, we are forced to make an indirect contribution to religious bodies amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars each year.[49] Tax exemptions go even to those religious organizations that are heavily engaged in political campaigns to criminalize abortion, support anti-gay legislation, and protect their tax privileges.

A PEOPLE'S god: liberation theology

Conservatives are not the only ones who quote Scripture to support their particular political agenda, so do those who identify with the poor and downtrodden. In 1513, during a peasant rebellion in Germany, a priest in Lehen said "It's a godly concern to put justice first, for God wills it, and in the Scriptures ... justice must come first."[50] In the United States during the early part of the twentieth century, there was the "Social Gospel" movement, led by Protestant clergy and laypersons who saw the fulfillment of Christian teachings in the collective betterment of society.[51] Efforts on behalf of nuclear disarmament, peace, and economic justice have persisted down to our day, carried on by socially conscious Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Brethren, and Unitarian organizations.

Beginning in the 1960s in Latin America and later extending to the Philippines and parts of Africa, there emerged from the ranks of the Catholic clergy a social activist movement known as "the theology of liberation." Its adherents openly sided with the mass of Third World people who lived in utter destitution, claiming that Christianity contained a doctrine of social and economic justice to be realized on earth through struggle against rich and powerful oligarchs.[52] Speaking for the interests of oppressed majorities, liberation theology represented a real revolutionary potential. As the church began to side openly with the poor, the makeup of its clergy started to change. In countries like Brazil, seminarians who once were recruited from affluent families now came overwhelmingly from the ranks of the poor.[53]

In the late 1970s, under the rule of Pope John Paul II, the Vatican threw its weight against the liberation theology movement. In Latin America the pope appointed a large number of conservative bishops to impoverished urban dioceses, transferred liberal ones to remote rural areas, suppressed liberation theology curricula in seminaries and imposed Vatican manuals, silenced liberation theology theorists, and forbade liberal and radical clergy from holding public office.[54] The prelates were to administer to souls and avoid engaging in political struggles. Meanwhile, Pope John Paul II, that most political of all popes, actively supported the political involvements of his more conservative clergy and laity who operated in a quasi-fascist organization, Opus Dei.[55] The pope, himself, continually intervened in world affairs, remaining up to his ears in counterrevolutionary politics, even

entering into a clandestine alliance with President Reagan to hasten the dissolution of communism in Eastern Europe.[56]

With the secularization of social life and the advent of science and industrialization, theocratic forces no longer rule over the Western world as they once did. Even the mullah theocracy in Iran has had to temporize on some issues and has not been as successful in exporting the Ayatollah's fanaticism throughout the Middle East as was feared. In the United States, the religious Right revivalism was not doing all that well by the early 1990s, neither in Congress, nor in the courts, nor in the presidential election of 1992, nor in public opinion surveys. But as long as religiosity remains serviceable for nationalistic mythology, the separation between church and state is never secure.

There are many urgent issues still to be confronted. First, we have to get the religionists off welfare by making the affluent churches and multimillonaire televangelists pay a fair share of taxes on their immense holdings and investments. Forcing us to subsidize them while they propagandize for their faith and live in luxury is a thievery of our earnings and a violation of the Constitution.

Second, freethinkers, liberation theologians, and atheists should have fair access to television's mass audiences. As of now, in regard to theological questions, there is no free market of ideas in mainstream discourse. As with pontics, so with religion, this remains a land of idols in which alternative and dissident views are denied access to mass audiences.

Third, our country needs not only freedom of religion but freedom of belief, including the freedom not to believe, without putting our public careers and civil liberties at risk. One step toward that goal is to become aware of and reject those who seek to win public office by wrapping themselves in the cloak of religiosity.

Fourth, religious belief today too often serves as an adjunct to state idolatry and superpatriotism. We must struggle to enlist it in the cause of social justice, as progressive religious elements have advocated. Only then will God be an inspiration for human betterment rather than a rationale for

human injustice and class privilege. This truly would be a great victory for democracy.

PART II: Class and Culture

CHAPTER 5: The Stampede from Class

There is a dirty little secret in America. It is not race or even sex; it is class. In this modern age, many formerly taboo subjects are now open to public purview. Be it abortion, child abuse, gay rights, wife battering, rape, sexual harassment, prurience in high places, or racial prejudice and hatred, such topics are now bandied about in the mass media—though rarely in a manner that do them justice. Not so with the subject of class. The expressions of class bigotry in our films and television, in our literature and textbooks, and in our institutions and daily lives remain largely unexamined, as do most of the more important realities of class experience.[1] If the subject of class is introduced, it is usually dismissed as an outworn "Marxist" notion having no relevance to modern America and increasingly less relevance everywhere else in the world.

THE FEW AND THE MANY

All of humanity may be divided into two groups, which I will call column A and column B. In column A are those who live principally off other people's labor ("principally" because they may themselves work and even draw a salary but that is not their paramount source of income). There are several hundred thousand adults in the United States who do not work, not because they are retired or infirm or unemployed or institutionalized, or raising children. They do not work because they do not have to. They have what we call "private" or "independent" incomes; that is, they get enough money to live—usually quite well—from the money they possess. Their money comes not from their own labor but from the labor of others in the form of (a) dividends on stock investments, (b) interest payments on bonds and securities, (c) the sale of appreciated holdings (stocks, bonds, currencies, commodity futures, and real estate), (d) rents on income property, (e) payments on privately financed loans or mortgage notes they hold as creditors, (f) royalties on oil and other mineral deposits, and various other sources. Such income may come directly from specific holdings or from estates and trust funds. It may be administered by the holders themselves or their brokers, accountants, and lawyers.

Years ago, our income tax returns used to distinguish between "earned income" and "unearned income," the latter being derived from the above list. It was one of the more revealing designations one was likely to find in a government document. And, no doubt for that reason the "earned" and "unearned" designations eventually were removed from federal tax forms.

Column A people can get quite annoyed when it is pointed out to them that they do not work. Since many of them do not languish in idleness, and since they equate work with whatever activity they happen to be engaged in, they do not see themselves as parasites. When asked, they will tell of their endeavors: taking art courses, serving with a charity organization or on a church or museum board of directors, raising horses, preparing for a long sailing expedition up the coast, an exploration in Indonesia, a shopping trip to Paris or London, going on a spiritual retreat or to a health spa, or "getting into" photography or ceramics or meditation.

Some wealthy individuals work in the more traditional sense. They pursue professions and occupy managerial posts—but it is out of personal choice, not economic necessity. A few prominent tycoons, whose names regularly appear in the business press, preside over vast financial empires. But the workday they put in does not explain the source of their immense wealth nor the pace at which it accumulates. The far greater portion of their money still comes from the ownership of assets that directly or indirectly engage the labor of others. Their own labor entitles them to a fair recompense, not an immense fortune.

The idea that wealth is constantly being transferred from the labor of many into the accounts of the few, from column B to column A, is widely at variance with the established notion in capitalist society that the relationship between rich and poor, owner and worker, is not exploitative but symbiotic and even providential. The question "Where would workers be without the company?" is more likely to be asked than "Where would the company be without workers?" Worker and owner are supposedly engaged in mutually beneficial "teamwork." Such class collaboration is presumed beneficial to all. Conversely, class strife is seen as harmful to all.

As with individuals, so with nations: the capitalist ideology denies that the relationship existing between rich multinational corporations and poor

nations is an exploitative one, a relationship that leftist theorists in this country and many people in poorer countries call "imperialism."

Instead it is claimed that rich nations and rich corporations "help develop" poor ones by investing in them—as if the corporations were in the business of uplifting the poor rather than enriching themselves. For generations this fable has been enunciated, even as the investors grew increasingly richer from their Third World investments and poor nations grew increasingly more indebted and poorer as these investments accumulated.[2] To this day, the prevailing view in corporate boardrooms and government councils is that multinational corporate investment is beneficial to, rather than exploitative of, the recipient nation.

If column A contains the rich and the privileged, column B holds the other 98 percent of humanity, those who live principally off wages, salaries, bonuses, fees, commissions, and pensions. I say "principally" because some of them may have savings and assets that give them a modicum of income from column A, but it is not enough to live on. What the people in columns A and B have in common is that they both live off the labor of the people in column B.

The accepted wisdom is that, since the rich in this country are relatively few, their cumulative wealth is not very much. Supposedly the bulk of the nation's wealth is spread out among the middle class. But the statistics do not support that view. As of 1992, the rich in America had a net worth of $6.14 trillion. The richest one percent controlled more than 60 percent of the national wealth—and that includes only assets declared. In contrast, over 90 percent of American families have no net wealth.[3] Wealth in the United States is highly concentrated. It is overwhelmingly under the control of organizations expressly designed to accumulate wealth: giant multinational corporations, banks, and other financial institutions.

Dividing society into column A and column B is a way of designating how people get money to live on. It is also the basic class division in society, the relationship of people to the means of production and wealth. Not for a moment do I mean to imply that all or even most people are consciously self-identified in one or another column. Many, perhaps most, accept the

conventional view that there is a symbiotic, not an exploitative, relation between rich and poor—and between rich and the middle class. Given the regional, ethnic, and occupational divisions of the people in column B, there is seldom a class-wide unity. Given the limited resources of those without wealth and power, it is difficult to achieve the kind of mass-based organization that is repeatedly called for by progressive activists.

The people in column A also have their divisions, but they have more financial resources with which to organize around their interests and a higher degree of unity and conscious awareness of what is at stake for them, being a class/or itself rather than just a class in itself, as evidenced by the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderberg Conference, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Committee for Economic Development, the Business Roundtable, the Bohemian Grove, and other formally organized congregations of business and policy elites.

Some in column B are not unaware that there are people in this world who enjoy very privileged lives. The animus they might feel toward "those who have more money than they know what to do with," is sometimes born of their desire to be wealthy themselves. They do not so much wish for equality as for the chance to partake of the enjoyments of inequality by changing stations in life with the privileged or winning a place among them. They not only envy but often admire the rich.

But there have been instances through history when opposition to the privileged class takes a more developed form. It arises not because ordinary citizens wish to be rich themselves, but because they want to get the rich off their backs so that they might have a decent life for themselves and their children and develop a more equitable, more humane, and less destructive way of using society's labor, capital, natural resources, technology, and social institutions. They want to make social and human needs the operating imperative in social production. Their concern is not class jealousy but class struggle, the desire for a better quality of life for the general populace. The difference between those who want to get in on the wealth and those who want to use society's wealth in a different way is the difference between playing the lottery to strike it rich and struggling collectively for democratic gains.

"Why should we hate rich people?" I once heard a student ask another, back in the 1960s when students asked such questions. If we are not to look down upon the poor neither should we hate or envy the rich, she maintained. Indeed, I would respond, we should not hate rich individuals as such. Many of them are decent people. Some even devote themselves to worthwhile causes like peace and the environment. The criticism here is not directed at particular individuals of a class but at a class system that allows such a concentration of economic and political power as to harm the life chances of the many and make a mockery of democratic institutions.

IDEOLOGISTS AGAINST CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

While incarcerated in Mussolini's dungeons from 1928 to 1937, the great Italian communist Antonio Gramsci wrote about politics and culture in his prison notebooks. But he had to be careful to eliminate words or phrases like "Marx," "Marxist," "capitalism," or "class" for these might attract the attention of the fascist censor who would then stop him from doing any more writing.[5] The fascists well understood their job was to suppress class consciousness wherever it might appear.

Today most of our intellectuals, journalists, and social commentators avoid the use of the word "class" as carefully as did Gramsci. Unlike him, they are not in prison and there is no need for rulers to put them there. Throughout their schooling and professional training they are censored by superiors and more generally by the monopoly culture in which they live.[6] Soon they learn to censor themselves. They still occasionally use "Marxism" and "Marxist" but it is usually in a dismissive, negative-labeling way. They don't need a fascist censor breathing down their necks because they have a mainstream one implanted in their heads. These internalized forms of suppression are far more effective in preserving the dominant ideology than any state censor could hope to be. Gramsci knew he was being censored. Many of our intellectuals and pundits think they are free as birds—and they are, as long as they fly around in the right circles.

Any allusion to class is likely to elicit a negative or skeptical response from mainstream intellectuals. Years ago, in a discussion with Harold Isaacs, a noted social scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I

suggested that much of what we define as "ethnic" is really representative of a common class experience, so that in many respects, urban working-class Poles, Italians, Greeks, Latinos, and others manifest not distinctly different traits but similar ones because of their being similarly situated in the class structure. Having arrived at this hypothesis after years of work in ethnic studies, I thought it was worthy of further investigation. But Isaacs was not happy to hear it. In a dismissive tone he said, "Well, if you want to fall back on a *Marxist* viewpoint, you can." His response puzzled me. Like any red-blooded American social scientist, I was at that time mostly ignorant of what Marxists might be saying about ethnicity or most other subjects. Yet the mere idea that class should be taken into account was enough for him to equate my suggestion with Marxism. To be sure, there is nothing inherently wrong in having one's views thought of as Marxist. What is wrong is the habit of rejecting an idea as deficient or dogmatic by simply labeling it "Marxist."

Even among some persons who are critical of the existing social system, one often finds an inability or a reluctance to deal with the enormous realities of class power in capitalist society. In December 1987, at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C., I attended a seminar conducted by the noted author Barbara Ehrenreich, who pointed out that we needed to rediscover the neglected subject of class. During the course of her discussion, she listed on the blackboard the classes usually deemed significant: professional-managerial, service workers, blue-collar workers, unemployed minorities, and the poor.

During the subsequent discussion, I pointed out that her schema, like the ones found in the academic literature, had left out the most important class of all, the owning class—the Mellons, Morgans, Rockefellers, Du Fonts, Hunts, Belmonts, Fricks, Vanderbilts, and others—the people who own the Uon's share of the land, labor, natural resources, and capital of the United States and much of the rest of the world, the column A people. Her response was a curious one. She said: "But they compose such a small group"—a consideration that would have been salient had we been taking a census rather than trying to rediscover class. What was in question, of course, was not their numerical significance but their political, economic, and cultural power.

Nevertheless, Ehrenreich wrote "Kapitalist class" at the top of the blackboard (for some reason preferring the German spelling) and drew a line separating that rubric from the ones below. Throughout the remaining discussion, she never referred to the capitalist class. To the extent that she acknowledged conflicts between classes, she concentrated on the hostility blue-collar workers felt toward professionals, saying nothing about the rage they sometimes felt toward their corporate employers. Her interest in class did not extend to class struggle. Her focus was on class as a stratification category, not class as the central factor in politico-economic power. Her rediscovery of class went only so far, stopping at the line she had drawn below "Kapitalist class."

Others on the left are engaged in what Ellen Wood called "the retreat from class."[7] Theorists like Laclau and Mouffe provide a good example of those "left" writers who are so fervently anti-Marxist as to seize upon everything else but class to explain what is happening in the world.[8] While they may not be outright conservatives on most political issues, such "left" theorists have pretty much the same effect in deterring class consciousness as do the conservatives and centrists. There are no columns A and B, as far as they are concerned. Or, if there are, they are of no great significance in understanding the limits of our democracy. Sometimes the dismissal of class becomes quite categorical. At a conference at Brown University years ago, I heard the anarchist Murray Bookchin assert, "There are no classes, only people." And at a meeting in New York in 1986, I heard the sociologist Stanley Aronowitz state, "When I hear the word 'class' I just yawn."

Even worse than the orthodox anticommunist leftists like Bookchin and Aronowitz are the mainstream theorists who make up the bulk of academia and media, and who do their share to suppress any awareness of the unjust and baneful effects that the class system has upon us and the environment. The campaign against dissident ideas about class power is never-ending. It is a campaign against social reality itself. The orthodox anti-Marxist theorists insist that ideas about ruling-class power and class struggle are bankrupt and irrelevant. If so, one wonders why they expend so much effort attacking and suppressing such ideas. Why is not class analysis ignored as simply of no consequence? In the academic journals and mainstream

political magazines, the refutations persist. But it is like listening to someone in a room talking on the telephone; we never hear the responses.

If ideas about class power—usually dismissed as "Marxist"—are irrelevant, why so much concern with beating a dead horse? John of Salisbury's twelfth-century discourses on the crucial questions dividing pope and king strike us as irrelevant. John Locke's refutation of Robert Filmer's defense of divine monarchy (as a legitimacy claimed through descendance from Adam) is exhaustive and even clever but it is quite irrelevant today—as demonstrated by the fact that such theories do not strike us as either right or wrong, but only as quaint and obscure cogitations from a different social reality, from an archaic climate of opinion that no longer seems relevant.[9]

Not so with critical Marxist ideas about wealth and power that still invite strenuous lashings because they continue to be not irrelevant but subversive. They are subversive because they disclose something real about existing economic interests, something that if widely understood could threaten these interests.

The process of indoctrination and socialization in capitalist society, a process we all undergo, does not operate with perfect effect. There persist a variety of material injustices that are repeatedly explained away by the spokespeople of the privileged class, but not always as successfully as they would want. People do not simply subordinate themselves to the existing socioeconomic system as gullible accomplices. They sometimes display anger, disillusionment, and even resistance.

Sometimes the instinct to fight back finds the wrong target, and people do unfortunate and deplorable things deprived of any accurate sense of what is the source of their discontent, some of them cast about for irrelevant foes and blame their real grievances on some ethnic or cultural minority or on the moral deterioration of the social order, thereby—in the latter instance—treating the symptoms of a troubled society as the cause.

If everyone completely subordinated themselves to the dominant ideology of the capitalist order, there would be no need for the endless stream of calumny, suppression, and misrepresentation propagated by the corporate-owned communication universe and directed against dissident views, no

need for the persistent effort to legitimate the existing social order, to keep recreating the conditions for capitalist cultural hegemony.[10]

Class reality is obscured by a dominant ideology whose basic tenets might be listed as follows:

1. There are no real class divisions in this society. Save for some rich and poor, almost all of us are middle class.

2. The differences between rich and poor are a natural given, accumulated wealth being not a cause of poverty. As the pie gets bigger, we all get more. It is not a zero-sum situation.

3. If there are class divisions, they are not serious but secondary to the community of interests shared by us all. In modern-day America, class is greatly eclipsed by more salient factors like race, gender, region, nation, life-style, and culture.

4. Our social institutions and culture are autonomous entities in a pluralistic society, largely free of the influences of wealth and class power. To think otherwise is to entertain conspiracy theories.[11]

5. Instead of class, it is individual human behavior that determines human performance and life chances. Therefore, existing social arrangements are not a matter of class power but a natural reflection of largely innate human proclivities.

Such notions are basic to class mythology in the United States and other modern capitalist societies.

TWO DEFINITIONS OF CLASS

To think critically about class power is a subversive but very democratic activity, a way of bringing the dirty little secret of class out into the open. I should note that class is accorded some attention in academic social science, pop sociology, and media commentary—but usually in a limited and diluted fashion, as representative of social stratification, or life-style, as one of a number of demographic traits or as an occupational status. So we

talk of "blue-collar" and "white-collar," "suburbia" and "inner city," "service workers" and "professionals." We refer to "upper-middle," "lower-middle" and "upper-lower" strata. Class, in this sense, has been correlated with opinions on social issues, voting behavior, educational levels, consumer tastes, child-rearing practices, sexual habits, and divorce rates.

Class is not a taboo subject when it is not called class or when it is treated as a given, as just one of those conditions of life having nothing to do with the interrelationships of power, wealth, and economic exploitation, nothing to do with the dynamic of capitalism. (As the example of my earlier-noted friend from MIT testifies, however, some people get uncomfortable even when class is introduced in that limited way.)

This notion of class as a sociological trait was embraced by the prominent sociologist Max Weber in his rather imprecise concept of *Stande* or status-class group. In Weber's view, society is populated by status-class groups that coexist with no productive or power relationship to each other. As Ste. Croix puts it, the Weberian Stande "will rarely involve anything more than efforts by *individuals* to rise up in the social scale—a feature of human society so general and obvious that it hardly helps us to *understand or explain* anything except in the most trite and innocuous way."[12]

In contrast, Karl Marx's concept of class describes a relationship to the means of production, to the means of accumulating wealth and power and developing an entire social order known as capitalism (or feudalism or slavery). Hence, one cannot think of a class as just existing unto itself, for any one class gets its definition from its relationship to another. There can be no slaveholders without slaves, no feudal lords without serfs, no capitalists without workers.

But that is not the most crucial feature of class. To be sure, all social formations get part of their definition from other social formations. Even Weber's status-class groups are defined in relationship to each other, since there can be no higher status group without a lower one. What is missing from Weber, and from most of orthodox social science, is an understanding of the dynamic relationship that gives classes their significance, centering around the ownership of the means of production and the need to sell one's labor if one lacks ownership. In the Marxist sense of class, the crucial axis

of the relationship is not between the two classes as such, but the linkage to a third factor: the exploitative nature of the production process. Class gets its significance from its relationship to production and the process of surplus accumulation, that is, the process of producing and accumulating wealth from human labor.

Marxists have not invented this relationship out of their heads; they only recognize it and study its significance. For them, class is a relationship between those who own the means of production (the factories, mines, refineries, agribusinesses, investment houses, banks, law firms, shipping lines, airplanes, hotels, hospitals, newspaper and magazine chains, television and radio stations, publishing houses, professional sports teams, department stores, shopping malls, supermarkets, and so forth) and those who work for the owners. This relationship is an exploitative one, involving the constant transference of wealth from the worker who produces it to the owner who does not work. It explains how some people can get rich without working or with doing only a fraction of the work that enriches them.

The actual level of production, its specific value-creating nature, is not the essence of the productive process. The core factor is the social relationship, the system of control and extraction of surplus value, in other words, the class interests that are served by the process of capital accumulation.[13]

As already noted, orthodox mainstream theorists, along with many who say they are on the left, usually perceive class not as a society-wide relationship involving labor, wealth, and power, but as just one sociological characteristic among many possessed by individuals, having to do with occupation and income level. Reduced to this, one's class affiliation can seem to have relatively low political salience, especially in a society like the United States, where class antagonisms are somewhat less visible than in Third World nations or even in industrialized countries like Great Britain. But class has a dynamic that goes beyond its immediate visibility. People may not be conscious of their class situations, yet they unavoidably are involved in class realities.

Class realities permeate our society, determining much about our lifestyles and life chances, our capacity to make serviceable things happen, our access

to power. How the dynamics and crises of capitalism are handled, and how the state is organized, are core questions for political struggle. They also are inescapably class questions. There are class interests involved in how the law is written and enforced, how political leaders pursue issues, how science and social science are studied and funded, how work is done, how a university is ruled, how the news is reported, how mass culture is created and manipulated, how careers are advanced or retarded, how the environment is treated, how racism and sexism are activated and reinforced, and how social reality itself is defined.[14]

Having little sense of class *as a relational dynamic that encompasses the totality of the capitalist social order itself,* the anti-class theorists are able to minimize the importance of class or even dismiss it out of hand. In doing so, they in effect dismiss the colossal realities of capitalism and imperialism —which may explain why some of them feel free to use such quaintly improbable terms as "postcapitalist" when describing the present-day capitalist world.

MANY CLASSES?

Not unlike orthodox mainstream social scientists, some "left" anti-class theorists treat the different factions within the nonowning class as classes unto themselves. Orthodox sociologists hail Max Weber for getting away from a "simplistic," "deterministic" Marxist model of class, for seeing that "the relationship to the means of production was not the only source of economic differentiation."[15] By declaring that the diverse social factions within society are "classes," orthodox social scientists and some of the "left" theorists think they have come up with a more nuanced and subtler analysis than the supposedly crude bipolarity offered by Marxists.

But what is more simplistic than to assume that differentiated occupation groups within capitalist society negate capitalist relations rather than strengthen them through specialized functions? "As is typical with bourgeois 'science,' the *appearance* of 'class' differences is taken to be the reality," notes Francesca Freedman.[16] It is this fallacy that enables many writers to speak of a "blue-collar class," a "white-collar class," a "professional class," a "managerial class," and sometimes a "professional-

managerial" or "technocratic" class. Again, in the absence of any treatment of capitalism's essence, occupational differences become primary. Class is reduced to a matter of income, status, and life-style. Attention is given to every social group except the capitalist class itself, to every conflict except class conflict.

This simplistic, reductionist Weberianism, which ignores the *exploitative* dimensions of capitalist relations, is what orthodox anti-class theorists have in common. They have difficulty understanding that the creation of a managerial or technocratic faction "constitutes no change in the property relations of capitalism, no creation of a new class. Rather, property relations become less personalized, more abstract, and achieve the *appearance* of independence from human relations."[17]

The anti-class theorists do not see how the "new classes," the "professional-managerial classes," help recreate the ideological and economic hegemony of the capitalist class. On this point, they begin to resemble the conservative ideologues who treat the "professional-managerial class" as an autonomous force, indeed, a dominant "Liberal Establishment" that carries out its own social agenda. But professionals and managers do not constitute an autonomous class, empowered as the creators of their own interests, living primarily off the labor of others. Rather they are mental workers who live much better than most manual workers but who still serve the accumulation process for the benefit of the owning class, working quite visibly as the legitimators and facilitators of corporate goals.

"NO REVOLUTION, NO CLASS"

To support their view that class (in the Marxist sense) is passé, the anti-class theorists repeatedly assert that there isn't going to be a workers' revolution in the United States in the foreseeable future.[18] Even if we agree with this prophecy, we might still wonder how it becomes grounds for rejecting class analysis. Are we being asked to believe that because a class revolution in modern industrial society is not in the offing, there is no such thing as class oppression; no exploitation of labor by capital; no class wealth and class power that holds sway over our economic, cultural, and political

institutions, doing so much to mold the conditions of our lives; no fighting back by people who work for a living; and no class struggle?

The feminist revolution, which was going to transform our entire patriarchal society, has thus far not materialized. Yet no progressive person takes this to mean that sexism is a chimera or that gender-related struggles are of no great moment. That workers in the United States are not throwing up barricades does not mean class struggle is a myth. Some anti-class theorists believe that class struggle is an actuality only if it includes both a developed class consciousness, and a struggle at the political level.[19] If so, we would have to deny the existence of class conflict not only in contemporary U.S. society but throughout most of history. To be sure, overt rebellion has not been such a rarity. There have been slave uprisings in antiquity, the peasant rebellions of the Middle Ages, the resistance by indigenous peoples to colonizers throughout Asia, Africa, and North and South America during five centuries of imperialism, the agrarian revolts in eighteenth-century North America and Europe, the industrial workers' insurrections in the nineteenth century, and a number of revolutions from Russia to Cuba to Vietnam in this century. Yet taken together these still prove the exceptional moments of history, and we would have to accept the anti-class theorists' mistaken notion that class struggle has been a relative rarity rather than the rule.[20]

But class struggle exists not only as an overtly conscious and organized phenomenon. In present-day society, it permeates almost all workplace activities. Employers are relentlessly grinding away at workers, and workers are constantly fighting back against employers. Capital's class war is waged with court injunctions, antilabor laws, union busting, contract violations, dishonest clocking of time, safety violations, harassment of resistant workers, cutbacks in wages and benefits, raids of pension funds, downgrading of jobs, layoffs, and plant closings. Labor fights back with union organizing, strikes, boycotts, job actions, absenteeism, and workplace sabotage. The conflict centers on how surplus value is divided (work and benefit struggles) and at what rate it is produced and under what work conditions. "The class struggle is never absent, right down to an argument over whether a worker has spent too long in the lavatory, or whether they have the right to go to the lavatory if they wish."[21]

Nor is class struggle absent when the media reports—or fails to report—certain political realities, when major-party candidates are financed and third parties are frozen out of the electoral process, when public budgets are put together, popular protests are muted or suppressed, and dissenters are harassed and put under surveillance. There is a dimension of class struggle in how people gain access to higher education, how health care is distributed, how the environment is treated, how the elderly try to survive, how women and people of color are dealt with, how religion is marketed, how entertainment is organized, and in a thousand other social phenomena.

How ironic that some "left" intellectuals announce that class and class struggle have become largely irrelevant at the very time capitalism is in dire straits; class power is more transparent in both the state and the economy; the tax system has become more regressive and oppressive; the upward transfer of income and wealth has accelerated; public economic assets are being massively privatized—transferred into the pockets of corporate investors; and underemployment, poverty, and other miseries of class exploitation are afflicting growing numbers at home and abroad.

The anti-class theorists see the working class as not only incapable of revolution but as on the way out, declining in strength and visibility. The uncritical reception accorded this dubious proposition helps explain why "the retreat from class" became something of a stampede by the 1980s, most notably in countries like France and the United States, and by the early 1990s, throughout Eastern Europe as communist governments were toppled in bloodless overthrows and replaced by right-wing, anti-Marxist, pro-capitalist states. For those who sought to be *au courant,* class oppression and class struggle now seemed terribly passé. During the 1970s and 1980s, the anti-class theorists set sail for seemingly more inviting ports, announcing that the future belonged to the Greens, the feminists, the gays, the political culturalists—or even the free market and the ideological right. Few people want to associate with a loser, and class struggle seemed like a loser.

So various "left" theorists devoted yet more time to Marxist bashing, shoring up their credibility by shuffling toward the center. Still worse were those who went all the way, now warming themselves before the affluent

hearth of conservatism. Having displayed "the courage to change," they are rewarded with a newly found access to mainstream publications, media appearances, government-sponsored trips, lush research grants, and other such rewards. After all, one has only one career to pursue, so why waste it on a hopeless cause like the working class? Anyone who still thought that class was of primary importance was labeled a diehard Marxist, guilty of "economism" and "reductionism" and unable to keep up with the "post-Marxist" "post-structuralist," "postindustrialist," "postcapitalist," and now."postdeconstructionist" times.

Explaining why, like so many other French intellectuals, she shifted away from Marxism and from studying working-class history, Michelle Perrot remarked: "After the war, the working class was highly visible; we believed that it was the vanguard. To do working-class history was one way of being an intellectual; a way of identifying one's self as being on the side of the oppressed."[22] A revealing admission by Perrot. She did not side with the working class because of the inherent question of justice and the realities of capitalist oppression, but because "the working class was highly visible," and an identity with the class was largely a means to another end, that of being a certified intellectual. And now, when the working class is perceived as in retreat and as diminishing in strength, when it is no longer the hottest ticket in town, one announces the advent of a post-something-or-other era and markets a new line of ideas.

Many of those who emerged in the 1960s with an instantaneously revolutionary militancy did not stay for the long march. Instead they devolved into anti-class theorists—while always remaining part of whatever intellectual "vanguard" might be proclaimed in whatever "post" era. We have heard about "pack journalism"; there also exists "pack intellectualism." As the working class "declines" in importance, the anti-class theorists move on to matters that are more deserving of their attention. We might expect that, at some future time, should the masses mobilize in great numbers, anti-class theorists will rush back to the fold, *plus gauche que les gauchistes.*

Contrary to accepted notions, the working class is not withering away, certainly not as a social reality, not in numbers and potential strength. Part

of the problem lies in what is meant by "working class." Those who apply the term only to the industrial proletariat are apt to see that class as being in relative, or even absolute, decline in the United States. But if we think of the working class as including service workers and most other employees who survive by selling their labor, then certainly there is a huge working-class majority in the United States,23 one that is laboring harder to stay in the same place, underemployed, and downgraded in job levels, wages, and benefits. We might recall the waterfront shape-up, in which workers gathered each morning in the hope of being selected for that day's job. With the growth of "casuals," "temps," "adjuncts," "part-timers," and "dailies," more and more people in the work force (including college teachers, media workers, and other professionals) are becoming part of a nationwide version of the shape-up.

The conservative goal has been the "Third Worldization" of the United States: an increasingly underemployed, lower-wage work force; a small but growing moneyed class that pays almost no taxes; the privatization or elimination of human services; the elimination of public education for low-income people; the easing of restrictions against child labor; the exporting of industries and jobs to low-wage, free-trade countries; the breaking of labor unions; and the elimination of occupational safety and environmental controls and regulations. Far from becoming passé, class issues are taking on a greater urgency as class oppression becomes more virulent.

The tendency of some anti-class theorists to define the working class as only blue-collar workers might explain the curious reaction of anti-class theorist Chantal Mouffe to a comment I made while speaking on a panel.[24] I observed that the Nicaraguan Revolution was a "working-class victory." Mouffe vehemently objected, stating that the Nicaraguan Revolution was "a popular uprising." But who is the populace? Was the Sandinista victory carried out by a large leisure class? by students? by a small professional class? In Nicaragua and other countries, a popular uprising and a working-class uprising are much the same thing.

The anti-class theorists do not tell us why they refuse to consider all nonindustrial workers (including farm laborers) as workers. The problem is more than a definitional one; it involves an important political question

going back to Marx and Engels, who argued for an alliance between workers and peasants, and to Lenin and other revolutionary leaders in various countries, who actually created such an alliance. It is a question pertinent to present-day political activists in the United States, who have forged alliances among different factions of the working class, including service unions that include white-collar and blue-collar employees. The definitional blinders that someone like Mouffe uses enables her to ignore the *class* reality of an entire revolution in Central America.

A grasp of class reality superior to Chantal Mouffe's was evidenced by George Rohal, the son of a steel worker and, himself, a supermarket manager in Weirton, West Virginia. On the subject of class, Rohal commented, "All classes are really working classes. Very few people sit back and just collect income. Anyone drawing any type of salary or a weekly paycheck is a working-class person."[25] This might not be true of the very top corporate CEOs, whose huge salaries are well-complemented by enormous investment earnings and whose organizational command positions give them a total identity with the owning class. Yet, Rohal's comment contains a core insight. Having never read the anti-class theorists and mainstream social scientists, he is able to see that class is a *relationship to ownership* and not just a demographic characteristic.

WEALTH AND POLITICAL POWER

To keep a select few in great affluence, millions of people work hard for an entire lifetime, never free from financial insecurity, and at much cost to the quality of their lives. The complaint is not that the rich have so much more than everyone else but that their superabundance comes at the expense of everyone and everything else, including the environment. If political reformers resent those of great wealth and power, it is not because they want great wealth and power for themselves, but because they do not want to live in a society where so many people endure want and insecurity so that the very rich can indulge their lifestyle and accumulate more and still more.

Furthermore, those who control the wealth of society translate their immense economic power into political and cultural power. Wealth gives the owning class a control over the livelihoods of millions of others, and

with this, a leverage over private and public affairs. Wealth brings social prestige and cultural dominance, including membership on the governing boards of corporations, foundations, universities, research institutions, and professional schools. Money is the necessary ingredient that gives the rich their political power, buying access to mass media, skilled lobbyists, and high public office. Likewise, the absence of money is what gives the poor not only their poverty but their relative powerlessness, affording them little protection from the harsh exigencies of the private market, whether as workers, tenants, or consumers. The lack of wealth limits the political enfranchisement of the poor—and most of the rest of us—by depriving us of access to national media and major political office.

Full access to political power is available mostly to persons with wealth or those who win the backing of persons with wealth. Such access enables monied interests to use the state to bolster and protect the private capital accumulation process through the use of police and military powers and with generous handouts from the public treasure in the form of direct subsidies to business, grants-in-kind, market protections, interest-free loans, bailouts, tax write-offs, and the development of whole new industries at public expense—such as railroads, aeronautics, nuclear power, pharmaceuticals, and satellite communications.[26] How the political economy serves as a force of *class* power remains for most academic investigators and media commentators a question not to be taken seriously.

CHAPTER 6: System without Spirit: The Relevance of Marxism

In the Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof,* the milkman Tevye launches into one of his conversations with God: "It's true as you say, God, that being poor is no disgrace. But neither is it such a great honor." He then sings "If I Was a Rich Man," in which he fantasizes about the pleasures of wealth. The sweetest of which, he concludes, would be the chance to sit in *shul* for hours on end and study the writings of the sages and prophets. Here Tevye experiences the contradiction between his spiritual need for learning and his class reality. To study God's word and so engage his own mind and spirit, he would need more leisure, more relief from the dawn-to-dusk travails of poverty.

MATERIAL REALITIES AND THE HUMAN SPIRIT

As Tevye's unfulfilled aspirations might demonstrate, the material and spiritual, often conceived as two things apart, are usually inextricably related. Bad housing and hunger are "merely" material conditions only for people who do not experience them. For others, poverty is a daily misery of the spirit as well as the flesh, affecting the most intimate areas of life, one's sense of self-esteem and peace of mind, the equations of joy and sorrow in one's heart and mind. Even when times are not hard, millions living just above—or even well above—the poverty level carry on with little sense of security or satisfaction, feeling that the human content of their lives has been constricted by money concerns and the grinding joylessness of material struggle.[1]

Class oppression also dehumanizes the spirit of the rich, often teaching them elitism, exclusivity, acquisitiveness, insensitivity toward the needy, and hatred for anyone who challenges their privileges."[2] But affluence has its undeniable rewards. It has a way of cushioning things and making life much easier. While we are told that the rich are not any happier than anyone else and sometimes unhappy with their lot, there are few recorded cases of people abandoning their fortunes for a life of wage labor. At the very least,

money makes it easier to escape the many miseries and anxieties that are caused by the lack of money. Wealth provides the best life chances, the best opportunities for education, travel, leisure, recreation, spacious living, lavish accommodations, an array of commodious services, the finest health care, superior access to influential social contacts, political careers, celebrity, favored institutional positions, and special protection by the law and from the law.[3] As measured by those standards, the rich live far better than everyone else.

Money is no guarantee of happiness, but it helps. When asked why he bought a $6 million home while the state he represents is one of the poorest in the nation, Senator Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia replied, "I don't think in the scheme of things—big house, little house, middle-size house—it makes a whole lot of difference. What I do know is that it's beautiful and it brings me great happiness already."[4] The affluent know they live extraordinarily well and they want to keep it that way. In December 1991, a White House spokesperson announced that George and Barbara Bush would continue their long-standing policy of not exchanging Christmas gifts: "They have everything they need and anything they want they can get."[5] In his 1992 State of the Union address. President Bush, a multimillionaire, denounced those in Congress who advocated increasing taxes on the very rich: "You kind of remind me of the old definition of the Puritan, who couldn't sleep at night worrying that somehow someone somewhere was out having a good time."[6] At least Bush was admitting that members of his class have a "good time." Such comments represent a refreshing departure from the usual professions about how the rich are burdened by their fortunes.

The conservative view would have us ignore the linkage between spiritual and material conditions, positing the spiritual as something "above" the material, something that helps us overcome our material hardships. A succession of millionaire U.S. presidents, wallowing in opulence, have admonished us to hold firm to our "spiritual heritage." The *New York Times* reported that President Reagan called for a "spiritual revival."[7] In doing so, he seemed to treat the "American spirit" as something floating above history, untouched by plundering corporations, regressive taxes, poverty

wages, inflation, unemployment, and the destruction of Third World countries by U.S. forces.

The "American spirit" has been counterpoised to Marxist communism, with the latter condemned as a system that preaches a spiritless materialism. Most Marxists indeed are *philosophical* materialists. They believe that consciousness emerges from human interaction with material reality. Ideas do not exist as independent forces apart from matter. But this does not mean that Marxists are materialists in the crass sense of being concerned only with material things. They are opposed to spiritualism but not to the human spirit. Indeed, at the heart of their critique is the charge that capitalism is a system that kills our spirit. Marxists do not deny the productive capacities of capitalism. Marx and Engels wrote, "The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together."[8] But at what price to human life and spirit? While creating the technological potential for abundance, capitalism continues to bring us worldwide economic instability and a world-threatening environmental devastation.

Business representatives assure us that management and labor "must work together as a team."[9] Marxists argue that one cannot speak of a partnership between boss and worker any more than between master and slave or lord and serf. While reformers demand that labor be paid "a fair wage," Marxists maintain there is no such thing under capitalism, for a fair wage would consist of giving workers, as a class, all the value they create, minus what is needed for community services and industrial maintenance and growth. But that would leave nothing for the capitalist, no great accumulations of wealth and power for the Morgans, Rockefellers, Du Fonts, Mellons, and a few hundred other dynasties.

Marxists condemn the capitalist system, not because it has failed to provide economic justice but because it cannot. Economic democracy means adequate food, housing, and clothing for all; economic security at all age levels; good medical care regardless of ability to pay; free education to the highest level of one's ability; and the right to nonexploitative employment and a safe and clean environment. When popular gains like Social Security and the right to collective bargaining are won in capitalist countries, it is not

because of the system—but despite it, the outcome of democratic struggle waged by the public against the powers of wealth and position.

Class oppression and great concentrations of wealth have existed in all class societies. What is unique about capitalism is the rational and systematic expropriation of labor for the sole purpose of capital accumulation. The ultimate purpose of work is not to perform services for consumers, nor sustain life and society, but to make more and more money for the investor. As Marx said, capital annexes living labor in order to make more capital. Capitalism transforms all things into its own spiritless image, moving into every area of work, culture, consumption, community, and environment to advance its raison d'être: to convert nature into commodities and commodities into capital, to convert land into real estate, human labor into accumulated wealth, and citizens into dependent workers and eager consumers, harnessing all of social life to its pursuit of profit.

NEED WE BURY MARX?

An anticommunist writer, Irving Howe, remarked, "The simplistic formulae of textbooks, including the Marxist ones, no longer hold. That is why some of us ... don't regard ourselves as Marxists."[10] Here I want to argue that Marxism is not "simplistic," only the image of it held by anti-Marxists like Irving Howe. Marxism has long been labeled "reductionist" and "orthodox" by orthodox mainstream writers. In 1915, Lenin wrote that bourgeois "science will not even hear of Marxism, declaring that it has been refuted and annihilated. Marx is attacked with equal zest by young scholars who are making a career by refuting socialism, and by decrepit elders who are preserving the tradition of all kinds of outworn systems."[11]

Leftish critics of Marx today, seldom acknowledging their debt to him, repeatedly refer to something they call "orthodox Marxism" or "doctrinaire Marxism," by which they mean nothing more than Marxism itself, since Marxism is judged by them to be inherently orthodox. Thus "orthodox Marxism" is a tautology but one they like, since the label of "orthodox" devalues and stereotypes Marxism and denies the possibility that it might be a dynamic and relevant system of thought. To the extent that the critics recognize development within Marxism, it is away from class analysis and

away from a concern with class struggle, giving more emphasis to other things. In their view, "unorthodox Marxism" would be something that has developed into something that has little to do with historical materialism and class analysis. I return the compliment by referring to the anti-Marxists as "orthodox mainstream social scientists," orthodox in the true sense, confining themselves to the conventional, eschewing the heterodox efforts of Marxist dissidents, and worshipping before the dominant images and idols. The left critics of Marx might be thought of as orthodox social democrats, orthodox democratic socialists, orthodox anarchists, orthodox liberals—but most certainly all of them are orthodox anticommunists.

With the collapse of communist governments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the accepted wisdom is increasingly that Marxism is obsolete and irrelevant. But the besieged authoritarian socialist states of Eastern Europe do not exhaust the realm of human experience with socialism. In any case, the corpus of Marxist writings is not about socialism as such. Marxism's first and major concern is with existing capitalism and imperialism—subjects that are very much relevant to our lives.[12] I wish to argue not merely that Marx is still relevant but that he is *more* relevant today than he was in the nineteenth century, that the forces of capitalist motion and development—which he did not invent but only discovered—are operating with greater, not lesser, scope and impact than when he first studied them.

This is not to say that everything Marx and Engels anticipated has come true. Their work was not a perfect prophecy but an imperfect, incomplete, yet most valuable science (as all sciences are imperfect and incomplete), directed toward understanding a capitalism that leaves its bloody footprints upon the world as never before. Marxism is not a science in the positivist sense, formulating narrow hypotheses and testing for predictability. Rather it shows us how to perceive things systematically and systemically. Its basic postulates are as follows.

In order to live, human beings must produce. All human activity, even the most spiritual, has an objective, material base. It is true that people cannot live by bread alone but neither can they live without bread. This does not mean all human activity can be reduced to material motives. A work of art

may have no direct economic motive attached to it, yet its creation would be impossible if there did not exist the material conditions that allowed the artist to work and show the work to interested audiences composed of people who have the time for art. We do not want to "reduce all things to economics," but this should not keep us from seeing the material and class dimension in most social experience.

What people need for survival is found in nature, but rarely in a form suitable for immediate consumption. Labor, therefore, becomes the primary condition of human existence. But labor is more than a means of providing for survival. Through labor, people develop their material and cultural life, acquiring knowledge, capabilities, and new modes of social organization. Thus do they create their history and civilizations. The level of production and the conflicting class interests that evolve around the productive forces become the crucial factors in shaping history.

Of itself, capital cannot create anything; it is the thing that is created by labor. In a class society, wealth is accumulated in the hands of relatively few who soon translate their economic power into political and cultural power in order to better secure the position of their class. Marxists fault capitalism for its exploitative inequality, for the way it favors the few over the many, leading to grave injustices and untold damage to the human condition. They conclude that capitalism has no loyalty to anything but itself, no loyalty to any particular tradition, nation, church, or people. It moves inexorably according to its inner imperative to accumulate capital at the highest possible rate. Marx and Engels referred to capitalism's implacable systemic drive to settle "over the whole surface of the globe," creating "a world after its own image."[13]

Conservative ideologues have long defended capitalism as the system that preserves "traditional values" and "family values" from corrupting influences.[14] In fact, capitalism is not dedicated to protecting the family or any other "traditional" institution. Capitalism's purpose is not to build and preserve communities, for investors will build or destroy communities as opportunities dictate, wiping out whole neighborhoods to put in factories, highways, or shopping malls. No system in history has been more relentless in battering down ancient and fragile cultures, devouring the resources of

whole regions, pulverizing centuries-old practices in a matter of years, and standardizing the varieties of human experience.

Nor is capitalism intent upon protecting our planet's ecology. Without regard for future generations, corporations will treat the environment like a septic tank in order to cut production costs and maximize profits. Enjoying a preponderance of politico-economic power, they have so far been successful in denying us the means to restructure our society along ecologically sane lines. Capitalists are committed to economic efficiency and rational production in order to increase profits. But, as the military budget shows, they just as readily court waste and duplication if it brings a bigger return.

Cost-benefit considerations often compel them to pass on their hidden inefficiencies and diseconomies to the public in the form of overpricing, environmental devastation, industrial wastes, unemployment, social dislocation, harmful products, and occupational injury. The wealth created by the mining companies, to mention one industry, is in the hundreds of millions of dollars. But the costs to society can be measured in the billions: the enormous medical expenses; the loss of farms, food supplies, forests, and whole communities; the building of ecologically unsound dams; the dredge fields that will never grow anything again; the landslides and climatic changes as land is turned into wasteland; and the great residues of mercury and other heavy metals that contaminate rivers and fish. Then there are the incalculable mortal costs of mining: the tens of thousands of fatal and nonfatal injuries and the premature work-force deaths from diseases like silicosis.[15] The government and the public are left to deal with the costly diseconomies of private production, while the capitalists skim the cream and boast of how private enterprise is so much more beneficial and efficient than government.

Marxists assert that capitalism is a system without spirit, having no loyalty to anything but its own process of accumulation. Nor could it be otherwise if one wished to survive as a capitalist, for the first law of the market is to make the largest possible profit from other people's labor or go out of business. Profitability rather than human need is the determining condition of private investment. There prevails a rational systematization of human

endeavor in pursuit of a socially irrational end: "accumulate, accumulate, accumulate." All this was enough to move even a bourgeois scholar like Max Weber to write the stinging indictment: "Of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: 'Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved.'"[16]

Marxists maintain that capitalism is not just an economic system but a political and cultural one as well, an entire social order. When we study any part of that order, be it the mass media, criminal justice, corporate finance, monetary policy, the presidency, defense spending, racism, sexism, the family, the medical profession, transportation, housing, overseas military intervention, or U.S. counterinsurgency in the Third World, we will see how that part of social reality reflects, within its own particularities, something of the nature of the larger social system—especially the system's overriding class interests.

The academic departments of our colleges and universities and our major news media teach us otherwise, presenting reality as divided into distinct subjects, a scatter of events and issues that ostensibly bear little relation to each other, treated in limited ways that fail to give us any critical insights into larger systemic causalities or into the particulars themselves. From a Marxist perspective, life is not an unrelated string of happenings, an endless series of imponderables—as it seems to be for mainstream scholars and news pundits.

Marxist scholars generally do not accept the assumptions made by orthodox mainstream social science that social values are self-generating, consensual forces that influence us like disembodied Parsonian spirits.[17] Rather they are usually mediated through institutions and are the products of institutional interests and class-power relations. Business interests exercise direct decision-making power through ownership and directorship over most of our "independent" institutions. They usually control the finances, budgets, and property of the institution, a control inscribed into law and enforced by the police powers of the state. Their power extends to the managers picked, the policies set, and the performances of employees, including those—or especially those—who need to be censored for

dissenting notions. Many social roles, then, are not just "games people play"; they are resources of power defined and fixed by class-dominated institutions that are, in turn, linked to each other by the overriding imperatives of the capitalist system. (In the next chapter, these points will be developed further in regard to specific institutions.)

If conventional social scientists have any one dedication in common, it is ignoring the linkages between social action and the realities of capitalism. For them, power is seen as highly fragmented and fluid, and class is nothing more than an occupational or income category (to be correlated with voting habits, education levels, consumer styles, and the like), not as a relationship between those who own and those who work for those who own. Institutions, likewise, are treated as floating out in social space, not linked to, the larger interests of the class system.

Reading the mainstream academic literature and listening to media commentators, one begins to wonder if capitalism even exists. Opinion makers will hold forth on American society without ever raising any critical reflections about the nature of the capitalist system. They will comment on "the health of the economy" but not on the system that produces it. This grand omission allows them to judge themselves as neutral and objective. Political scientists can study the presidency and Congress for decades without so much as a sidelong glance at the imperatives of the capitalist system that plays such a crucial role in prefiguring the political agenda, the national and military budget, the domestic program, and the national security state's policies of war and counter-insurgency. Social science is cluttered with community-power studies that treat particular communities as isolated, autonomous entities. These investigations are usually limited to the immediate interplay of policy actors, with nothing said about how the issues and the communities linkup to larger power formations. 18

By ignoring the moving forces and larger structures that exercise such an influence over social behavior, conventional social science can settle on surface factualness, on the false concreteness of trying to explain immediate actions in immediate terms. What is habitually overlooked in such research (and in our news reports, our daily observations, and sometimes even our political work and political struggles) is the way seemingly remote systemic

forces may determine our experiences. A Marxist approach helps us see connections to which we were previously blind, to relate effects to causes, to replace the arbitrary and the mysterious by the regular and the understandable.

Is Marx relevant today? Only if you want to know why and how the media filter and distort the news in a mainstream direction, while being not as free and independent as they profess to be; why more and more people at home and abroad are facing economic adversity, while wealth continues to accumulate in the hands of relatively few; why our cities and community services are going bankrupt and public debt grows larger than ever; why there is so much private wealth and public poverty; why U.S. forces and the CIA find it necessary to police and intervene in so many regions of the world; why Third World nations produce such vast riches, while their peoples remain so poor; why hospitals, libraries, and schools are being closed, while more and more prisons are being built; why so much work needs to be done in various areas of our economy, while so many people are deprived of work; and why an abundant economy offers chronic recessions. Marxists do not speak with one voice and one mind, but they know how to draw, rather than deny, connections between immediate experience and the larger structural forces that shape that experience.

MARXIST PREDICTIONS, MORE RIGHT THAN WRONG

Those who reject Marx frequently contend that his predictions about revolution and the historic mission of the proletariat have been proven wrong. From this, they further assume that his analysis of the nature of capitalism and imperialism must also be wrong. But we should distinguish between Marx the chiliastic thinker, who made grandly optimistic predictions about the flowering of the human condition, and Marx the economist and social scientist, who provided us with fundamental insights into capitalist society that have been applied and built upon by other scholars ever since the nineteenth century. It is the latter Marx who has been regularly misrepresented by anti-Marxist writers. Consider the following predictions:

Business Cycles and the Tendency toward Recession

Marx noted that something more than greed is involved in the capitalist's relentless pursuit of profit; survival also is a consideration. Given the pressures of competition and rising wages, capitalists must make technological innovations to increase their productivity and diminish their labor costs. This creates problems of its own. The more capital goods (machinery, plants, technologies, fuels, and other such things) needed for production, the higher are the fixed costs and still greater the pressure to increase productivity to maintain profit margins. As an industry becomes more capital intensive, proportionately more money must be invested to generate the same number of jobs. Big business does not create jobs; in fact, as just noted, capitalists are constantly devising ways to eliminate jobs in order to cut labor costs. In the period from 1980 to 1990, the net number of new jobs created in the United States by the Fortune 500 companies was zero.[19] The millions of new jobs of that period came mostly from less capital-intensive light industry, service industry, and the public sector.

For all its productivity, capitalism will remain a system that creates chronic economic instability, Marx predicted. Since workers are not paid enough to buy back the goods and services they produce, there is always the problem of insufficient demand and declining markets. If owners see no opportunity for the realization of surplus value, they reduce their work force and cut back on production and investment. The ensuing layoffs lead to a further decline in demand and to business recessions that inflict the greatest pain on those with the least assets. Marx foresaw this tendency for profits to fall and for protracted recessions. This was an extraordinary prediction, for in his day economists did not recognize boom-and-bust business cycles as inherent to the capitalist system. But today we know that recessions and economic instability are chronic conditions and—as Marx also predicted—they have become international in scope.[20]

Capital Concentration

When Marx's great work *Capital* appeared in 1867, bigness was the exception rather than the norm. Yet, he predicted that small companies would get increasingly squeezed out or gobbled up. Large firms would buy out weaker adversaries, survive boom-and-bust cycles, and increasingly dominate the business world as capital became more concentrated. This was

not the accepted wisdom of Marx's day and must have sounded most improbable to those who gave it any attention. But it has come to pass. Indeed, the rate of mergers and takeovers was higher in the 1980s and early 1990s than at any previous time in the history of capitalism.

Growth of the Proletariat

Another of Marx's predictions is that the proletariat (workers who have no tools of their own and must sell their labor for wages or salaries) would become an ever greater percentage of the work force. In 1820, about 75 percent of Americans worked for themselves on farms or in small businesses and artisan crafts. By 1940 that number had dropped to 21.6 percent. Today, less than 10 percent of the labor force is self-employed.[21] The same shift in the work force can be observed in France, England, Germany, and Japan.[22] Likewise in the Third World: from 1970 to 1980 the number of wage workers in Asia and Africa increased from 72 million to 120 million.[23] The tendency is toward the steady growth of the working class throughout the world, both as physical laborers and service employees.

Increasing Misery of the Working Class

Marx believed that as wealth becomes more concentrated, poverty will become more widespread and the plight of the proletariat ever more desperate. According to his critics, this prediction has proven wrong. They point out that Marx wrote during a time of raw industrialism, an era of robber barons, child labor, and the fourteen-hour workday. Through persistent struggle, the working class greatly improved its life conditions from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. Today, mainstream spokespersons portray the United States as a predominantly middle-class society.

One might wonder. During the Reagan-Bush era, from 1981 to 1992, the share of the national income that went to the people in column B, those who work for a living, shrank by over 10 percent. The share that went to the people in column A, those who live off investments, increased almost 30

percent. The richest families were hundreds of times wealthier than the average household in the lower 90 percent of the population. The gap between America's wealthy and impoverished was greater than it had been in forty years.[24]

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the poor were the fastest growing social group in the United States. The number living below the poverty level climbed from 24 million in 1977 to 35 million by 1986. And people were falling more deeply into poverty than in earlier times and finding it more difficult to rise from it. The number of low-income households increased dramatically, and hunger and tuberculosis were on the rise.[25] Over this same period there was a general down-scaling of the work force and a decline in the conditions of labor. Regular employment was increasingly replaced by contracted labor or temporary help, working for lower wages with little or no benefits. Unions were forced out of existence or seriously weakened; protective government regulations were rolled back or remained unenforced; and there was an increase in speedups, injuries, and other workplace abuses. Generally, the goal of conservative corporate capitalism is the Third Worldization of the United States—the development of a large, low-wage, underemployed work force; no taxes for corporations and wealthy investors; abolition of inheritance taxes; increasing profit rates; abolition of labor unions; and elimination of environmental, occupational, and consumer-safety protections.

By the early 1990s the growing impoverishment of the middle and working classes, including small independent producers, was becoming evident in various Western countries, especially Great Britain. In twenty years, some 22 million farmers were ruined in industrialized capitalist nations, more than half the entire rural population of these countries.[26]

Meanwhile, in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, free-market "reforms" brought a dramatic increase in poverty, unemployment, inflation, crime, corruption, homelessness, hunger, emotional depression, suicide, and ill-health—along with the growth of large fortunes for the very few.[27]

Throughout the Third World there has come a dramatically deepening impoverishment over the last half century. As foreign investment has increased, so has the misery of the common people who are driven from the land. Those who can find employment in the cities are forced to labor for subsistence wages. We might recall the enclosure acts of the late eighteenth century in England, which disinherited the peasantry and drove them into the industrial hellholes of Manchester and London, transforming them into factory workers. That process of enclosure continues throughout the Third World. Along with the conversion of land from subsistence farming to cash-crop exports, there is the crushing burden of foreign-debt payments, recessions, and inflation. While oligarchs grow still richer, the plight of the masses grows ever more desperate and the middle class sinks to proletariat status—as Marx predicted.[28]

In countries like Argentina, Venezuela, and Peru, per capita income was lower in 1989 than it had been in 1970. In Mexico, workers earned 40 percent less in 1989 than in 1980. One-third of Latin America's population, some 130 million, were living in desperate poverty, while tens of millions more were barely managing. In Brazil, the purchasing power of the low-income populace declined by 50 percent between 1940 and 1990, and two-thirds of the people suffered varying degrees of malnutrition. In much of Africa, misery and hunger have assumed horrendous proportions. In countries like Zaire, 80 percent of the people live in utter destitution. In Asia and Africa, more than 40 percent of the population exist at the starvation level in what has been called "absolute poverty."[29] Marx predicted that an expanding capitalism would bring greater wealth for the few and growing misery and economic purgatory for the many. That is exactly what is happening—on a global scale.

Proletarian Revolution

As capitalism develops so will the proletariat, Marx predicted. We have seen that to be true. But Marx went further. With the growing misery and polarization, the masses would eventually rise up and overthrow the bourgeoisie and put the means of production under public ownership for the benefit of all. The revolution would come in the more industrialized capitalist countries that had large, developed working classes. What struck

Marx about the working class was its level of organization and consciousness. Unlike previously oppressed classes, the proletariat seemed capable of an unparalleled level of political development. It would not only rebel against its oppressors, as had slaves and serfs, but would create an egalitarian, nonexploitative social order as never before seen in history. In his day Marx saw an alternative system emerging in the clubs, mutual-aid societies, political organizations, and newspapers, of a rapidly growing British working class. For the first time, history would be made by the masses in a conscious way, a class for itself. Sporadic rebellion would be replaced by class-conscious revolution. Instead of burning down the manor, the workers would expropriate it and put it to use for the collective benefit of the common people, who were the ones who built it in the first place.

Certainly, Marx's predictions about revolution have not materialized. In his later years, he himself began to entertain doubts about the inevitability of a workers' revolution. Marx presents a plausible case for class struggle but that, of itself, does not mean inevitable proletarian victory.[30] There has been no successful proletariat revolution in an advanced industrial capitalist society. As the working class developed in these countries so did the capitalist state, whose function has been to protect the capitalist class, with its mechanisms of police control, cultural hegemony, and violent suppression. Marx also underestimated the extent to which the advanced capitalist state could use its wealth and power to create a variety of institutions that retard, discourage, and misdirect popular consciousness or blunt discontent through reform programs. Contrary to his expectations, successful revolutions occurred in less developed, largely peasant countries such as Russia, China, Cuba, and Vietnam—though the proletariats in these countries participated and sometimes, as in the case of Russia in 1917, even spearheaded the insurgency.

The prevailing force in class struggle has not been revolution but counterrevolution. Marx seems to have underestimated the devilish ferocity of capitalist states in attacking and destroying revolutionary struggles, both armed and electoral. This they have done in Indonesia, Guatemala, Chile, El Salvador, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and scores of other countries, murdering hundreds of thousands of people in the process.[31]

Although Marx's predictions about proletariat revolution have not materialized as he envisioned, in recent years there have been impressive instances of working-class militancy in Iran (against the Pahlavi regime), in South Korea, South Africa, Italy, Great Britain, and dozens of other countries, including even the United States. In 1984-85, in Great Britain, a bitter, year-long strike resulted in some 10,500 coal miners being arrested, 6,500 injured or battered, and eleven killed.[32] For the British miners, class conflict is something more than a quaint, obsolete concept. In 1984, one writer observes, "In the last few years, the Brazilian working class ... has played precisely the role assigned to it in 19th century Marxist theory, paralyzing Sao Paulo in a succession of enormous mass strikes that began over bread-and-butter issues but which in the end forced the military to make major political concessions, notably the restoration of a measure of authentic party-political life."[33] As noted in the previous chapter, class struggle is not the rare exception but an everyday reality.

The Roman Catholic Pastoral *Letter on Marxist Communism* rejects the notion that "structural revolution can entirely cure a disease that is man himself," nor can it provide "the solution of all human suffering." There is no denying that revolution does not cure all human suffering, nor would a perfectly just society (if there could be such a thing). But why is that assertion used as a refutation of Marxism? Most Marxists are neither chiliastic nor Utopian. They dream not of a perfect life and flawless society but of a better life and more just community, making no claim to eliminating all suffering. Even in the best of societies there would be the inevitable assaults of misfortune, bereavement, illness, accident, mortality and other vulnerabilities of life. And, certainly, some humans are seriously flawed and given to wrongful deeds at times. But this is all the more reason why we do not want to see power and wealth accumulating in the hands of a favored and unaccountable few, which is the central dedication of capitalism.

The goal of a good society is to structure social relations and institutions so that cooperative and generous impulses are rewarded, while antisocial ones are discouraged. The problem with capitalism is that it best rewards the worst part of us: the ruthless, competitive, conniving, opportunistic, acquisitive drives, giving little reward and often much punishment—or at

least much handicap—to honesty, compassion, fair play, many forms of hard work, love of justice, and a concern for those in need.

As noted earlier, the "merely" material conditions of capitalist life represent an enormous affliction of the spirit for millions of impoverished people at home and throughout the world. One of the goals of democratic struggle (of which Marx was a part) is to create a society in which people, like Tevye, the poor milkman discussed at the beginning of this chapter, can be free from the imprisonment of spirit that comes with economic want; a society that is socially and economically just, in which everyone has the opportunity to think, grow, and feel fully human.

CHAPTER 7: Monopoly Culture

Culture does not operate in perfect harmony with the economic order. It has functions of its own. Discordant "self-generating" social forces can arise. Were it not so, were we acculturated into a capitalist society with perfectly totalistic effect, there would be no dissent, deviance, or criticism. But the dissent that does exist is usually denied access to larger publics by the corporate-controlled media and other business-dominated institutions. While society itself can contain diverse forces, most of mass culture is not self-generated but ideologically constrained. As noted in the previous chapter, capitalism is not just an economic system but an entire social order; hence, we can speak of a "capitalist culture."

STATE POWER AND THE CONTROL OF INSTITUTIONS

Institutions—especially the more highly articulated structures such as the state, church, army, university, press, and business corporation—do not just exist as neutral, independent bastions. They are tied by purchase and persuasion, by charter and power, to capitalist class interests. In every society, those who control the material means of production also control the mental means of production. The economically dominant class is also the politically dominant. Nowadays, such thoughts usually are dismissed as just so much Marxist ideological mouthing. So it may come as a surprise to discover that throughout most of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, leading bourgeois theorists and philosophers saw the linkage between wealth and politics. Adam Smith noted in 1776 that civil authority "is in reality instituted for the defense of the rich against the poor, or of those who have some property against those who have none at all."[1]

The state power of the dominant economic class never stands alone. As Napoleon once said, you can do anything with bayonets except sit on them. A class that relies solely on the state's military force to maintain its rule is never really secure. Behind the state is a whole supporting network of doctrines, values, myths, and institutions that are not normally thought of as political. The state, as Antonio Gramsci noted, is "only the outer ditch

behind which there [stands] a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks."[2] These supportive institutions help create the ideology that transforms a ruling-class interest into a "general interest," justifying existing class relations as natural and optimal societal arrangements. Along with monopoly capital, we have monopoly culture.

Those persons who believe the United States is a "pluralistic" society resist the notion of a ruling-class monopoly culture. They see social institutions as autonomous configurations, innocent of any linkage to business power and the state. They treat culture as something distinctly separate from—and even competitive with—politics. They talk about keeping the arts, sciences, foundations, schools, professions, churches, and media free of the taint of political ideologies. Since the pluralists do not believe that corporate wealth dominates the political arena, they certainly are not about to think it dominates cultural life.

A closer look reveals that institutions such as the media, publishing houses, sports and entertainment enterprises, and most hospitals are not merely influenced by business ideology but are themselves profit-making corporate conglomerates. Furthermore, *nonprofit* cultural institutions like schools, museums, scientific and research associations, foundations and universities are ruled much like the profit-making ones—by boards of directors (or trustees or regents), drawn mostly from the big-business class or those in the pay of that class. These boards have final say over the institution's system of rewards and punishments, its budget and personnel, its investments and purposes. They exercise power either by occupying the top positions or hiring and firing those who do. Their power to change the institution's management if it does not perform as they desire is what gives them control.[3]

The boards of directors exercise authority not by popular demand but by state charter. Incorporated by the state, they can call upon the courts and the police to enforce their decisions against the competing claims of staff, clients, or other constituents. These boards are non-elected, self-selected, self-perpetuating ruling coteries of affluent persons who are answerable to no one but themselves. They are checked by no internal electoral system, no opposition parties, no accountability to the institution's rank and file or the

general public, whose lives they might affect with their decisions. "When the state acts to protect their authority, it does so through the property system; that is, it recognizes the corporation as the private property of some determinate group of men and it protects their right to do, within legal limits, what they please with their property."[4] Yet, institutions so ruled are said to be the mainstay of democratic pluralism.

In a word, the cultural order is not independent of the business system. Nor are institutions independent of each other, being owned outright or directly controlled by the more active members of the business class in what amounts to a system of interlocking and often interchanging directorates. We know of more than one business leader who not only presides over a bank or corporation but has served as a cabinet member in Washington, is a regent of a large university, a trustee of a civic art center, and, at one time or another, a member of the board of a major newspaper, a church, a foundation, or a television network.

This confluence of the business class with state and culture developed markedly during the latter part of the nineteenth century, as capitalism came to maturity and capitalists moved to achieve a cultural hegemony to shore up their economic dominance. As one historian describes it:

> In short order the railroad presidents, copper barons, the big dry-goods merchants and the steel masters became Senators, ruling the highest councils of the national government ... but they also became in even greater number lay leaders of churches, trustees of universities, partners or owners of newspapers or press services and figures of fashionable, cultured society. And through all these channels they labored to advance their policies and principles.[5]

With command over organizational structure, personnel, and budget comes command over the practices and content of the institution. Those who call the tune may not be able to exercise perfect control over every note that is played, but individuals who stray too far from the score, who create too much cacophony, eventually find themselves without pay or position. Along with the punishments for dissent there are the rewards for comphance—the grants, fellowships, commissioned studies, honorary awards, special programs, top appointments, conference invitations, fat lecture fees, junkets, and other such enticements. Let us consider some "nonpolitical" institutions.

SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

Among the institutions enjoying an undeserved reputation for autonomy and democracy are the schools and universities. A number of studies show that American public schools regularly indoctrinate their pupils into dominant-class values and conformist attitudes, suppressing information and opinions that might be offensive to capitalist ideology. Grade-school and high-school students are exposed to a sanitized rendition of U.S. history and foreign policy and an idealized version of this country's political and economic institutions. They are taught loyalty to the free-enterprise system and are discouraged from having "feelings of mistrust ... toward the government."[6] In addition, "our schools are cluttered with militaristic indoctrination created by the Pentagon and with conservative propaganda produced by giant corporations—all made available free, or at nominal cost, and all masquerading as pedagogically proper teaching material."[7]

Capitalist ideological orthodoxy is found also at the university and graduate levels. With the growth of modern capitalism, the university evolved from a clergy-dominated institution concentrating on classical education and theology to one that served industry's growing need for managers, scientists, engineers, lawyers, and agronomists. Through the early decades of the twentieth century, the business class tightened its hold over the colleges, using tax-free foundations and state and federal money to build modern universities and professional schools. Publicly funded universities now provide business with a wide range of services and trained personnel, and have substantial investments in big corporations. Many academics are consultants to multinational corporations and to government agencies. Some are also corporate directors. Such scholars write frequently on public policy, while leaving their readers unaware of their ties to the business world and the national security state.[8]

The Pentagon alone funds about two-thirds of all basic scientific research and development in the United States, spending additional millions each year on "social science research." Whether it is a question of improving military recruitment campaigns, lobbying techniques, or counterinsurgency, or of making the tax burden less visible, consumers more responsive, or factory workers, inner-city residents, and Third World villagers more

compliant, teams of social scientists have been there with bright and often ruthless ideas, never defining new goals or challenging the class interests of their patrons, but trying to develop ways of reaching and justifying the objectives desired by the politico-economic elites who pay so well for their talents. Their task has not been to change the world but to help those in power to control it.

The university's dependence on rich foundations, corporations, and government has affected the substance of its academic research and curriculum.[9] Yet most of the recipients of this bounty maintain that they are independent, self-directed scholars who have not been bought by anyone. Their remarkable ability to remain free of the hand that feeds them is matched only by those members of Congress who claim a similarly miraculous independence of the moneyed interests that contribute to their campaign coffers.

The "free and independent" colleges and universities of the United States do not govern themselves. As already noted, most institutions of higher education, like most other institutions, are run by boards of trustees drawn almost entirely from the business community, including real-estate magnates, bankers, and directors and chief executive officers of leading corporations.[10] Lacking any special training in the field of higher education, trustees nevertheless exercise authority over capital funding and budget; the hiring and firing and promotion of faculty; the formation and abolition of academic departments, study programs, courses, and curriculum; tuition and student fees; commencement speakers, guest lecturers, degrees, and awards; and just about any other decision including, if need be, the name of the school football team.[11] From the 1960s through the 1980s, as in earlier decades, university administrations or boards of trustees repeatedly purged communists, Marxists, progressives, and other dissidents whose views and actions were opposed to capitalism.[12]

LAW

Another institution that pretends to cultural autonomy is the legal profession. In the early days of the Republic, leaders of the bar often saw themselves as sentinels preserving civil order from popular insurgency and

mob rule. Upon becoming a professor of law at Harvard in 1829, Joseph Story announced that the lawyer's most "glorified and not infrequently perilous" duty was to guard the "sacred rights of property" from the "rapacity" of the majority. The lawyer and the law were the "solitary citadel" that stood between property and property redistribution.[13] Today, lawyers have learned to be more circumspect in their expressions of devotion to the propertied class and are inclined to talk about "justice for all." But law schools continue to reflect the biases of the owning class they serve. Corporate law, tax law, contract law, and property law are the prestige areas. The ground rules in these courses are drawn from nineteenth century laissez-faire capitalism, with passing recognition given to the need for limited government regulation to rectify certain "abuses." Judicial outcomes are presented as products of "legal reasoning" rather than responses to political and economic forces. Attention is on individual rights and procedures, not on substantive social justice between classes, races, and sexes.[14]

Realty law is studied from the viewpoint of the landlord rather than from the needs of the tenant. Corporate law is seen from the perspective of the firm rather than from the human rights of the worker and consumer. Like most people, lawyers tend to go where the money is, working for industrial polluters rather than for ecologists; getting subsidies for agribusiness, not food stamps for the poor; lobbying for banks, not displaced residents; working for the rich person's tax privileges, not the wage earner's tax reform.

Generally speaking, the schools of law, medicine, and academic scholarship train students to discard their initial outrage regarding injustice and privilege. Students learn that such concerns are "naive," "not professional," and "not relevant" to what they are learning, and that they must consider the larger picture, avoiding "simplistic" radical muckraking and, at the same time, confine their efforts to the narrow serviceable questions of their trade. In this way one is more likely to survive professionally and attain the preferred positions and lifelong rewards of the profession.[15]

MEDICINE AND HEALTH CARE

Medicine is another realm of our "pluralistic" culture that both supports and is supported by capitalist values and interests. Medical associations, hospitals, and medical schools regulate the health market by fixing prices, limiting the supply of doctors, and punishing physicians who might charge less or advocate less lucrative ways of bringing treatment of the public. A special vocabulary is used to disguise the fact that doctors are, for the most part, affluent entrepreneurs who run businesses ("practices") and have customers ("patients") to whom they sell a service ("treatment") at high prices ("fees"), using restrictive state laws to restrain trade and create a monopoly market ("licensing to protect professional standards"), and thus ensure high incomes for the physicians. Because of these restrictive laws, people in many states are forbidden to choose alternative treatments, such as osteopathy and homeopathy, and inexpensive dietary treatments. Attempts by physicians to bar competing practices date back to the early nineteenth century, when doctors who sought monopoly control struggled against a public that resisted—not without good reason—the "fearsome and futile" methods of bleeding, blistering, purging, burning with mercury, and poisoning with arsenic.[16]

Today, doctors still rely heavily upon expensive and often useless or unsafe drugs. According to a Senate subcommittee, about 30,000 people die each year from adverse reactions to medical drugs, most of which are marketed for quick profits by drug companies without adequate testing for efficacy and safety.[17] Over the last few decades, responding to the public demand for decent health care, government has subsidized private hospitals with many billions of dollars, allowing almost unlimited payments for health services and capital expenditures; measures that have done more to increase health-industry profits than to improve treatment.

Within the past few decades medicine has become a major capitalist industry in its own right, the second largest in the United States. Yet, thirty-five million Americans lack health insurance. Millions who do have coverage find it a hardship to pay the high premiums or find that the insurance coverage is inadequate and unreliable; public hospitals that service the poor are closing down; 40 percent of infants and toddlers are not fully vaccinated; and the elderly spend as large a part of their income on health care as before the passage of Medicare.[18]

Modern medicine reflects capitalist priorities not only in its high cost and inequitable distribution but also in its ideology and social relations. Much of illness has a social content linked to unsafe work conditions, chemically contaminated food and water, bad housing, insufficient prenatal care, poor nutrition, and pollution. Improvements in economic conditions do more for public health by way of prevention than organized medicine does with its cures. Yet the medical profession takes little account of socioeconomic realities, preferring an individualistic, entrepreneurial, and laboratory-centered approach.[19] Thus, while cancer rates have skyrocketed in the United States, it is rarely noted that almost all cancer is caused by human-made conditions. Still, the medical profession continues to spend millions seeking specific cures while saying little about industrial causes and social prevention.

Health-industry profits have grown, even during recent recessions, to the point where health programs for employees have become a major cost of production for corporations, inducing a reaction by government and business against the medical capitalists who are cutting into the profits of the rest of the capitalist class. As of 1993, the federal government was moving toward "managed competition" health insurance, a publicly funded program that would not diminish medical and insurance industry profits but would shift still more of the costs onto taxpayers. Meanwhile, health costs continued to skyrocket.

NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

One widely accepted myth is that we have a free and independent press in the United States. In truth, the print and broadcast media are giant profit-making conglomerates, owned and controlled by powerful banks and rich, conservative individuals. The reporters and editors who work for them learn to see the world with much the same blinders as owners, advertisers, corporate heads, and White House and Pentagon officials. Journalists think twice before delving into sensitive areas. They worry about having their copy cut and rewritten, and about being removed from choice assignments, passed over for promotion, or fired. The consequence is that "coverage is limited and certain questions never get asked," according to a writer for the *Chicago Tribune.*20 The business-owned news media portray the U.S. role

throughout the world as essentially benign and providential, a bulwark against communist "aggression"; a view that is left unchallenged and largely unexamined, gaining certainty through decades of repetition.

One myth newspeople have about themselves is that they are "objective" and "neutral" in their presentation of the news, though they rarely define these terms. In practice, objectivity means framing stories about Indochina, Central America, and Eastern Europe from a State Department perspective. Objectivity means heating up or cooling down the cold war as ruling elites might want, and demonizing any nation that resists U.S. client-state status. Objectivity means saying not a word about U.S. imperialism, and never questioning the premises on which the national security state rests. Objectivity means portraying Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the invasions of Grenada, Panama, and Iraq in a way the White House wants. Objectivity means reporting strikes as the bosses see them, talking about workers' "demands" and management's "offers," dwelling on how costly the strike will be for the economy, without a word about what the costs will be to workers and their families if they do not win a contract. Objectivity means ignoring 50,000 people marching in Washington, DC, to protest U.S. intervention in Central America, but sending a multitude of press people to cover a twelve-person Nazi-Klan rally in Arlington, Virginia. Objectivity means saying anything you want, presenting reality in any way, so long as it is within the parameters of the capitalist ideology.[21]

The news media aside, the supposedly nonpolitical entertainment media also present the world according to capitalism. With a few notable exceptions, films with progressive, pro-labor, pro-peace, pro-socialist, anti-imperialist content are consigned to oblivion or to limited showings before small, select audiences. In contrast, over the years television and Hollywood have inundated the mass public with cold-war films about the Red Menace at home and abroad, along with cop shows, spy films, and other programs that offer mind-boggling portions of violence, brutality, racism, sexism, crass consumerism, authoritarianism, militarism, jingoism and other values so functional to modern capitalism.[22]

Mass-media entertainment has expropriated a great deal of the social and artistic activities that were once the people's culture. Capitalism moves into

all areas of experience, recreating all things in its own image, influencing not only the way people work but the way they create, play, and consume. The story-telling arts have lost out to the canned dramas of Hollywood and television. Folk music and homespun songfests give way to a relatively few high-priced performers playing before mass audiences who pay to listen or who purchase tapes and recordings. What now passes for entertainment is a product marketed by a handful of corporate executives, network bosses, and distributors. With the exception of a few big stars, the profits of the entertainment industry go to distributors, promoters, and investors. It is not the artists and performers who control Hollywood, it is the powerful New York banks. Cultural workers can be as estranged from their workplace and product as any industrial worker.

THE ARTS

The image we have of the artist as an independent purveyor of creative culture may be as misleading as the one we have of the scientist. What is referred to as the "art world" is not a thing apart from the art market; the latter has long been heavily influenced by a small number of moneyed persons like Huntington Hartford, J. Paul Getty, Nelson Rockefeller, and Joseph Hirschorn, who have treated art works not as part of our common treasure but as objects of pecuniary investment and private acquisition. They have financed the museums and major galleries, the publishing houses that print art books, the expensive art magazines, the critics, the university endowments, and the art schools and centers—reaping considerable tax write-offs in the doing.[23] As trustees, publishers, patrons, and speculators, they exercise an influence over the means of artistic production and distribution, setting political limits to artistic expression.

Artists who move beyond the acceptable boundaries run the risk of not being shown. Art with radical political content is labeled "propaganda" by those who control the art market.[24] All of Socialist Realism, both the brilliant and the mediocre, is *by definition* not art, since it is political. While professing to keep art free of politics ("art for art's sake"), the gatekeepers impose their own politically motivated definition of what is and is not art. The art they buy, sell, show, and have reviewed is formalistic, privatized, and detached from real events. Even when realistic in form it is usually

devoid of social content and political commentary. What is preferred is Abstract Expressionism, described by Norman Goldberg as "highly personal, unrealistic and sufficiently ambiguous to stimulate a broad range of aesthetic interpretations. It had the attraction of dissidence and yet it was apolitical."[25]

LABOR UNIONS

The history of labor unions in the United States shows how difficult it is to function under capitalism without either becoming its auxiliary or its victim. A number of prominent union leaders, from Samuel Gompers to Lane Kirkland, have been pro-capitalist, hostile toward leftist parties, superpatriotic, intolerant of internal dissent, and often suspicious of rank-and-file militancy—enough to leave many people convinced that unions are worthless, corrupt, co-opted organizations that are actually harmful to workers' interests. A closer look tells us that, whatever their deficiencies, unions often take progressive stances on a wide range of critical issues and have won some real democratic gains for workers. To the extent working people have any mass democratic organization that provides them with opportunities for collective action, and some protection from the relentless oppression of management, it is the labor union. Unions are the major countervailing class power pitted against the process of capital accumulation. Our "pluralistic" society does not easily tolerate this kind of pluralism. For this reason, business and government treat unions differently from all the social institutions previously discussed, attacking rather than subsidizing them.

Union busting today is a major industry, with more than a thousand firms doing a $500 million yearly business teaching companies how to prevent workers from organizing and how to break existing unions. Unions are severely constrained by right-to-work laws and legal restrictions on strikes, boycotts, and organizing activities. The result is that in recent decades they have been declining in membership.[26]

THE FUNCTIONS OF CULTURAL DOMINANCE

To sum up, capitalism is not only an economic system but an entire social and cultural order. Capitalists exercise cultural hegemony (a) by direct ownership of the means of mental and physical production, (b) by occupying positions of institutional command as trustees and directors, (c) as prestigious patrons and contributors to artistic and educational institutions, and (d) by procuring public funds to subsidize private institutions. While their cultural hegemony bolsters their state power, they also use their state power to finance and expand their cultural hegemony. This cultural dominance sustains the existing politico-economic system in several ways.

First, cultural institutions, such as the media and the health and entertainment industries, are a major source of capital accumulation. Capitalists are involved in them because they make money from them.

Second, nonprofit institutions such as universities, professional schools, and research centers provide the kind of specialized services and trained personnel that business does not want to pay for itself. When capitalists realized they needed literate, punctual, and compliant machinists, they then favored public schools. When they needed lawyers, engineers, and managers, they approved of professional and technical schools.[27] The substantial public funds used to sustain these institutions represent an indirect subsidy to the capital-accumulation process.

Third, these institutions are crucial instruments of ideological and class control, socializing people into values that are functional to the existing system, while suppressing perspectives that are not. The goal is to maintain existing class relations while muting class struggle.

Fourth, not only through propaganda and socialization but also through "good works," or the appearance of such, do capitalists achieve hegemonic legitimacy. The ruthless industrialist becomes the generous philanthropist; the expropriator becomes "a leader of society," a trustee of our social and cultural needs.[28] To appreciative American audiences, Mobil Corporation is better known as the sponsor of "Masterpiece Theater" than as the heartless exploiter of oil workers in the Middle East and elsewhere. Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Clark, Duke, Vanderbilt, Tulane, and Stanford are no longer

ruthless business tycoons but prestigious universities. And Carnegie is remembered not for the workers he starved but for his Hall, his Institute, and his Endowment.

The primary goal of capitalist cultural dominance is not to provide us with nice concerts and museums but to give capitalism's exploitative reality a providential appearance, so that people learn not only to accept, but admire and appreciate, the leadership and stewardship of the owning class. So it is said, "More for the rich means more for the rest of us because they create the jobs we need" and, "they do a lot of other good things for society."

In fact, some of their undertakings do have beneficial spin-offs. This brings us back to Gramsci's insights about how hegemony works to induce people to consent in their own oppression. Gramsci noted that the capitalist class achieves hegemony not only by propagating the right values, attitudes, and beliefs, but by actually performing vital social functions that have diffuse benefits. Railroads and highways may enrich the magnates, but they also provide transportation for much of the public. Private hospitals are for profits not for people, but people who can afford them do get treated. The law is a class instrument, but it must also to some degree be concerned with public safety.

The ruling class must act affirmatively on behalf of public interests some of the time—at least in those situations where private profits can be made while servicing public needs. If the ruling class fails to do so, Gramsci notes, its legitimacy will decline, its cultural and national hegemony will falter, and its power will shrink back to its police and military capacity, leaving it with a more overtly repressive but ultimately less secure rule.[29]

LEGITIMACY AND IMPERFECT CONTROL

Ruling-class power makes the struggle for democratic change long and difficult. But change and progressive victories are not impossible. The ruling class rules, but not quite in the way it wants. Its socializing agencies do not work with perfect effect. There is just so much cover rulers can give to their injustices. They also must make a certain number of concessions, which become points of vulnerability. The law is an instrument of class

control but an imperfect one, for successful struggles have been fought to defeat retrogressive laws and pass progressive ones that are socially desirable and the basis for further struggles. In order to perform their class-control function, the media must maintain their credibility. To do that, they must give some attention to the realities people experience. They must deal with questions like: Why are my taxes so high? Why are people losing their jobs? Why is the river so polluted? Why are we spending so much on the military? The media's need to deal with such things—however haphazardly and insufficiently—is what leads conservatives to the conclusion that the media are infected with "liberal" biases.

The ruling class must forever contend with the democratic forces of working people, women, African Americans, Latinos, and other disadvantaged groups. The struggles of particularly oppressed groups such as African Americans can become a catalyst for change throughout the society, as we saw in the late 1950s and through the 1960s when the civil rights movement strengthened the civil liberties struggle and then helped galvanize the antiwar movement, from which, in turn, emerged a long-dormant feminist movement.

To maintain its legitimacy and popular acceptance, the ruling class must maintain democratic appearances, and to do that it must not only lie, distort, and try to hide its oppression and unjust privileges, but must occasionally give in to popular demands, giving a little in order to keep a lot. In time, the legitimating ideology becomes a two-edged sword. Bourgeois hypocrisies about "democracy" and "fair play" are more than just the tribute vice pays to virtue. Such standards put limitations on ruling-class oppression once the public takes them seriously and fights for them.

Legitimacy cuts both ways within cultural institutions. The danger with calling the oligarchic university a "democratic institution" is that students and faculty may take the assertion seriously and demand the right to ideological diversity and self-governance. We can observe the two-edged quality most dramatically today in one of the oldest of legitimating institutions—one I discussed in chapter 4—the Church. Nothing is more revealing of the contradictory nature of hegemonic control than an anticommunist pope racing about the globe, ordering his priests to abstain

from the class struggles of the impoverished, while simultaneously presenting himself as a champion of the poor.

In sum, monopoly culture, like monopoly economy, suffers from internal contradictions. It can invent and control just so much of reality. Its socialization is imperfect and not without vulnerabilities. It cannot rest perfectly secure because it does not serve the people but must pretend that it does. Its legitimating deceptions are soft spots of vulnerability, through which democratic forces can sometimes press for greater gains.

An understanding of monopoly culture shows us how difficult it is to fight capitalism on its own turf, but sometimes it is the only turf available. At the same time, we must continue to create alternatives to monopoly culture—alternative media, films, art, schools, and scholarship. But such a "counterculture" must be grounded in an alternative politics so that it confronts rather than evades the realities of class struggle and avoids devolving into cultural exotica and inner migration. It is easier to shock the bourgeoisie with cultural deviance than to defeat it with mass revolutionary organization.

The struggle for democracy is, among other things, a struggle to win back the entire cultural and social life of the people, so that someday we can say: This land is our land, and so too this art and science, this learning and healing, this prayer and song, this peace and happiness.

CHAPTER 8: Class Myth and Class Bigotry

The noted anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, writing about the Melanesian Islanders, observed that a myth is not an idle tale but an ideological force. Myths of origin serve to legitimate property claims, distinctions in rank, and the dominance of a particular clan.[1] Similarly, Sigmund Freud wrote that every social order seeks to defend itself. "Its organization, its institutions, and its laws"—and one might add, its myths—"are all directed to this end: they aim not only at establishing a certain distribution of property, but also at maintaining it; in fact, they must protect ... everything that contributes to the conquest of nature and the production of wealth.[2]

A myth can best fulfill its function as a legitimating force when not perceived as a myth, when propagated as common sense, correct learning, or sacred teaching. The myths of foreign peoples are easier to detect than our own. Their gods have the look of alien fabrications. Their mores seem arbitrary, their caste and class systems unjust. Critical perception of one's own society comes less easily. Things most familiar to us are sometimes hardest to discern in any discriminating way, for they appear as nothing more than the natural order of things. The fish is last to see the water, noted the anthropologist Ruth Benedict.[3] And when dominant elements within our society do everything to encourage acceptance of the existing social order and discourage dissidence, then critical perception becomes all the more difficult. Still, for our own edification, and as part of the democratic struggle, we should examine (as we have been doing throughout this book) the mythologies of our own society, especially those relating to ruling-class legitimation.

PLURALISM AND THE MYTHS OF "DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM"

Propagated by news pundits and academics, the myth of pluralism, or "democratic pluralism," tells us that power in U.S. society is widely distributed. All important interests have their say and get their way—at

least some of the time. No social group or class consistently predominates. Policies are formulated through a multilateral interplay of interest groups. The government acts as a mediator of these conflicting demands, seeking to develop a workable consensus.

This image of a fluid pluralistic interplay begs the whole question of structured, institutionalized class power. While there certainly exists a wide diversity of interest groups, the resources of power actually are highly skewed in favor of those who represent wealthy interests and against those who represent impoverished or poorly organized ones. As noted in the previous chapter, seemingly diverse institutions are linked to the same dominant class interests. There supposedly exists a pluralism of autonomous interests in such varied places as the Pentagon, the scientific and academic establishments, business corporations, media, and Congress; yet whatever their differences about particular tactics and priorities, elements in these various organizations can work in impressive synchronization to propagate the agenda of the national security state and the preservation of U.S. politico-economic global power.[4]

The capitalist system has its own myths as embodied in the free-market ideology. There is the myth of individualism, which reduces human community to a conglomeration of atomized persons, each plotting his or her own gain, driven by a devotion to the cash nexus. Yet the whole competition benefits everyone, thanks to the wonders of the free market as directed by Adam Smith's "invisible hand." Rather, everything would come out fine, conservatives argue, were it not for the intrusions of government regulations and social programs. For the conservative, public-interest programs represent the connivance of meddlesome bureaucrats rather than popular victories won after prolonged struggle. Corporate interests denounce government intrusion in the economy while themselves feeding gluttonously out of the public trough. At the same time, conservatives denounce government meddling in our lives, yet advocate the extension of state power in the control of personal morals and political dissent, and the suppression of national independence movements throughout the Third World.

Free-market myths get woven right into our language. Think how the roles of producer and parasite are reversed. In an earlier day, it was assumed that those who worked hard to make the goods were the producers. Even as late as the 1790s, the term "manufacturer" meant worker—literally, he who makes things with his hands. Today the title belongs to the owner—who not only expropriates the worker's labor power but even his name. In an earlier day, creation denoted ownership; now ownership signifies creation. Thus, we speak of industrial corporations as "producers" and agribusiness firms as "growers" when, in fact, they produce and grow nothing. They are organizational devices for expropriating the wealth produced by the physical and mental labor of their employees.

When the communist nations of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union collapsed, they were transformed into right-wing, pro-capitalist societies. The view propagated in the West was that "democratic capitalism" had triumphed. Democracy, it was said, can flourish only when socialism is replaced by capitalism. In fact, during Gorbachev's last three years,'there was more political democracy in the socialist Soviet Union than under the subsequent capitalist rule of Boris Yeltsin. The new "free market" regimes in the former communist states purged left dissidents from government, media, labor unions, and universities. They suppressed demonstrations and rolled back gains won by women, national minorities, and workers. And they sought to curb the recently won democratic powers of the legislature and eliminate opposition to executive rule.[5]

This association of democracy with free-market capitalism overlooks capitalist nations such as Turkey, Zaire, Indonesia, Guatemala, Honduras, and a host of others that do not extend democratic rights to their citizens. Even among the capitalist nations that observe democratic forms, there is often a lack of democratic content, with most of the policy outputs benefitting the few over the many.

Furthermore, democratic gains are usually won *against* the opposition of the wealthy and powerful and not with their encouragement. It would be inaccurate to credit rich landowners, merchants, industrialists, and financiers with the genius of democracy when, in fact, they have opposed almost every democratic reform—be it universal suffrage, free speech, civil

liberties, women's rights, civil rights, collective bargaining, social security, occupational safety, or regulations for a safe and clean environment. Rather than buttressing democracy, free-market capitalism—with its immense concentrations of wealth and power—is a constant discouragement and danger to popular rule and the general welfare.

A myth propagated by U.S. rulers is that U.S. military power is used throughout the world to defend democracy, create "stability," and protect our national security. Yesterday it was the relentless Red Menace that supposedly threatened us; today, some other demonized adversary. In fact, policymakers intervene to buttress authoritarian governments, sometimes overthrowing democracies, as in Guatemala, Chile, Greece, Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia, and elsewhere, creating much suffering and *in*stability in the process.[6]

That the policy seems to contradict its professed goals does not mean the policymakers are befuddled. When we look at the real goals of U.S. policy we find coherence and consistency. The U.S. government invariably supports those client-states that make the world safe for capital investments and opposes those that attempt to redirect a more substantial portion of their labor and resources away from the multinationals and into self-development. The mythology offered in defense of U.S. interventionist policy may seem irrational, but the policies it seeks to justify are quite serviceable for investor interests. A myth that misleads the public is fulfilling its function. That its purveyors intend to mislead us does not mean they are themselves confused. There is a difference between stupidity and subterfuge.

The myths that serve dominant class interests are not just neutral cultural products. Strictly speaking, a culture does not create anything but is itself a creation of social forces. Myths and beliefs are mediated through a social structure, through socializing agents such as parents, media, churches, schools, peers, and the state. There is, then, a material and social dimension to the propagation of myths.

The dominant mythology endures, not only because of the immense propaganda resources of the moneyed class, but because the corporate system can control our life options even if we do not want it to. Thus there

are people who work for profiteering businesses at underpaid and unsafe jobs, who eat chemicalized foods, breathe filthy air, drive costly and ecologically disastrous cars, and live in overpriced, substandard housing—not because they are brainwashed by myths and don't know any better, but because their options are limited by powerful class realities.

MYTHS OF NATURAL SUPERIORITY AND MUTUAL UTILITY

Every economic elite, having its own interests at heart, seeks to protect its wealth and good living. "For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also" (Matthew 6:21). And there too will be your class ideology. Throughout history, the propertied classes have sought to legitimate their privileges by claiming assignment from God (divine rights), or providence, or natural superiority.

In ancient Greece, the aristocratic class maintained that persons of high station exhibited, by that very fact, their superior nature. According to Aristotle, the relations between governor and governed, slave and master, were "in the manner that nature intended" and best served the interests of both in "mutual utility."[7] Such sentiments were held more firmly by slaveholders than by slaves.

Feudalism was described by a sixteenth-century scribe as "suche a knott of colaterall amytie betwene the Lordes and the tenaunts that the Lorde tendered his tenaunt as his childe, and the tenaunts againe loved and obeyed the Lorde as naturellye as the childe the father."[8] This description of serfdom would have surprised no one more than the serfs themselves, living as they did under the crushing burden of compulsory labor and heavy taxes. "The very essence of feudal property," writes R. H. Tawney, "was exploitation in its most naked and shameless form."[9]

In prerevolutionary China, the rich gentry responded confidently to anyone who advocated social change: "Can the sun rise in the west?" Condemned to a life of veritable serfdom, the Chinese peasants were told that the existing landlord-dominated social relations were as immutable as the course of celestial bodies.[10]

From 1787 to 1800, the US. government was controlled by the Federalists, a political party composed predominantly of the rich, who assumed they "had a natural born right to rule their inferiors in the social and economic scale."[11] Federalist leader Alexander Hamilton considered the "rich and well born," as the only ones fit to govern. He denounced the "pernicious innovation" and "amazing violence and turbulence of the democratic spirit."[12] Another Federalist, Justice Samuel Chase, saw the common people as "governed by their passions and not by reason." Were they to have popular suffrage, the country would "sink into a mobocracy."[13]

The capitalist mythology says little about how those of "natural superiority" originally accumulated their wealth. Within the lineage of many a patrician can be found a plunderer or swindler, whose ill-gotten gain became the family inheritance. Nelson Aldrich, Jr., notes the dubious but not unique achievements of his own great-grandfather, the son of a mill hand, who entered the U.S. Senate with modest assets, received an annual salary of only $5,000, yet died after thirty years in politics with $12 million.[14] If one looks into the genealogies of many "old families," one discovers episodes of slave trafficking, bootlegging, gun running, opium trading, falsified land claims, violent acquisition of water and mineral rights, the extermination of indigenous peoples, sales of shoddy and unsafe goods, public funds used for private speculations, crooked deals in government bonds and vouchers, and payoffs for political favors. One finds fortunes built on slave labor, indentured labor, prison labor, immigrant labor, female labor, child labor, and scab labor—backed by the lethal force of gun thugs and militia. "Old money" is often little more than dirty money laundered by several generations of possession.

In the modern era of popular elections, leaders learned to deny the existence of class warfare, even as they engaged in it from the top down. During the labor agitations of the late nineteenth century. Senator Roscoe Conkling denounced the "most dangerous of the country's enemies," who maintained that a conflict existed between the "two great partners, capital and labor."[15] He and other politicos sought to divert working-class awareness by what one historian called "the most ingenious tactics of ideology": they played upon racial, linguistic, regional, and religious differences and old country loyalties in order to "work against the ground swell of class interest" and

divide or neutralize sections of the working populace, displaying "an unusual awareness—rather than indifference—to underlying economic issues and class forces."[16]

Class-conscious plutocrats are the first to condemn class measures when they seem to benefit the common people. In 1935, press mogul William Randolph Hearst denounced the Wagner Act (designed to protect labor's right to organize), as "one of the most vicious pieces of class legislation that could be conceived—un-American to the core."[17] In the 1988 and 1992 presidential campaigns, George Bush repeatedly denounced as "class warfare" attempts to revoke tax laws that benefited the rich. "There is no place in American public life," he said, "for the kind of talk that divides Americans along class lines."[18] For an upper-class warrior like Bush, policies that shifted the tax burden onto the shoulders of the working populace were not class warfare, only policies that sought to undo such favoritism.

Another upper-class warrior, Pope John Paul II, denounced efforts by liberation theologians to mobilize the poor and "see the poor as a class, as a class in struggle," or as separate from "pastoral obedience."[19] The pope did not condemn top-down class struggle, the continually successful pursuit of power and privilege by rich interests against which liberation theology pitted itself.

Even the more apolitical members of the favored class dislike references to class conflict. An affluent acquaintance of mine recently told me she disliked terms like "ruling class" and "working class" because they divided people into good guys and bad guys and categorized them in "self-righteous ways." Discussions of such things as "class oppression" impressed her as just "a lot of stereotypes" and seemed to "come from a certain type of person" (itself a stereotype). She did not feel the same about references to racial and gender oppression. They were "of a different order." Being of privileged background, she saw little value in critical deliberations about class privilege.

CLASS DISTANCES

As noted in chapter 5, "class" denotes a relationship to the means of production and to the expropriation of surplus value. But there is also a subjective dimension to class, as experienced in everyday life. Even if many of us are not all that aware of it, class experience pervades most of our existence: our speech, dress, education, career opportunities, lifestyles, and choice of friends and spouses.

The well-to-do usually manage to insulate themselves from unpleasant class realities. In 1844, Engels noted how the bourgeoisie could live for years in Manchester without ever seeing poor neighborhoods. The city was planned for "the conveniences of the rich," allowing them to travel to their places of business in town by routes that ran directly through working-class districts, "without even realizing how close they are to the misery and filth which lie on both sides of the road." The main streets conveniently hid the misery with rows of "lower middle-class" shops.[20]

More important than geographic distance is social distance. Even when residing only a neighborhood apart, rich and poor live worlds apart. The hunger and desperation of New York's poor in the late nineteenth century was a subject that never "penetrated the social conversation within the charmed circles of Astor or Vanderbilt," who dwelled just on the other side of town.[21] In the mid-twentieth century. North Carolina communist Junius Scales, who came from a prosperous family, was astonished to discover after joining the party that he had been unaware of the poverty existing among thousands of people right in his own hometown.[22]

A 1992 nationwide survey of Domino's Pizza delivery employees reported that the longer the driveway and more upscale the residence, the smaller the tip.[23] Why are the rich so stingy with their tips? It may be a matter of social distance. They have little identification with low-level service people and so have less problem sending them off with a pittance. Generosity toward the lower classes historically has never been an important part of upper-class awareness. The patrician view is that the poor are not deserving and should not expect too much. For all the talk about noblesse oblige, the noblesse never measures up to the oblige.

A revealing vignette about social distance and class feelings is provided by A. Hamilton Gibbs, an Oxford graduate who joined the British Army during World War I as an enlisted man. Gibbs describes the warm, kindly manner of the working-class soldiers who were his comrades. But apparently he never could feel toward them what he experienced upon meeting another upper-class enlisted man:

> I heard a voice with an "h" say, "How perfectly ruddy." I could have fallen on the man's neck with joy ... I made a bee-line for that man. In a few minutes we were swapping names and where we lived and ... laughing at our mutually draggled garments.
>
> We both threw reserve to the wind and were most un-English, except perhaps that we may have looked upon each other as the only two white men in a tribe of savages. In a sense we were. But it was like finding a brother and made all that difference to our immediate lives. There was so much pent-up feeling in both of us that we hadn't been able to put into words. Never have I realized the value and comfort of speech so much, or the bond established by sharing experiences and emotions.[24]

It might be mentioned that, by virtue of his elevated social background, Gibbs was soon plucked from the "savages" and awarded an officer's commission.

One might dismiss this instance as inapplicable to the United States, which is said to be not as class-bound as British society. One of the myths circulated by the dominant class in the United States is that there is no dominant class in our supposedly egalitarian society. In truth, there exists a patrician stratum that acts not unlike its counterparts in other nations, with its elite schools, clubs, business cliques, exclusive residences, resorts, social registers, cotillions, charity balls, and endogamous marriage patterns—an encompassing network of associations designed to shore up class boundaries by keeping those of lesser means at a distance.[25]

Social distance between classes is not something that just happens. It is actively fostered by the exclusivity of class institutions and individual socialization. The goal is upper-class homogeneity. Consider Episcopal High School for Boys, a prep school in Virginia:

> [A] place where sons of the working wealthy are made ready and lean for the long race to college, law school, medical school, the family business, the corporate ladder. "I can't imagine what would get in my way," a 17-year-old junior ... says of his career goals. ... Ten of the eleven boys interviewed ... aspire to incomes equal or greater than their parents'. ... Most of the eleven boys have blond hair. Their teeth are noticeably straight. [They] range in age from 14 to 18. ... None is Black. Five are Episcopalian, four of other Protestant denominations, two are Catholic. ... All have a relative or family friend who attended Episcopal or another private boarding school. ... All the boys' parents attended college; all of the boys plan to attend college. One of [them] describes himself as a political independent; the rest call themselves Republicans.[26]

One study shows that upper-class children sometimes have problems of conscience that clash with their families' class position. One child was upset that miners were killed in an explosion in his father's mine, another that migrant farm workers employed by her father were killed, another that people were burned to death in urban housing owned by her father's corporation. In that last case, the father told her to mind her own business. Another child was advised by his parents not to be sympathetic to the Indians when watching cowboy movies; another that he should not identify with Robin Hood but would do better to watch other television programs. Another was told that family money could not be given to the survivors of industrial accidents in a company owned by her father because it was his money to spend as he pleased. Another was told that a fatal accident in her grandfather's mine was caused by the miners themselves, and that the miners' union was violent and a danger to her family and to the "rights of mine operators." When troublesome questions arise among bourgeois youth, class consciousness is not left to chance.

Despite the extensive socialization that goes on in the homes and schools of the wealthy, privileged individuals seldom refer to themselves or their practices and possessions as "upper class." Only on rare occasions are class preferences openly advertised. In an upscale magazine published in Washington, DC, there appeared this personals ad: "Pretty Professional Blonde, upper-class, non-smoker, seeks refined, upper-class or upper-middle-class gentleman, 30-42, with six-digit income, well-educated Protestant ... for marriage and children."[28]

In many social situations in our "classless society," people are likely to be treated according to their perceived status. A receptionist relates this incident:

> We were having a fairly intelligent conversation. Then they asked me what I did. When I told them, they turned around to find other people with name tags. I wasn't worth bothering with. I wasn't being rejected because of what I had said or the way I talked, but simply because of my function. After that, I tried to make up other names for what I did—communications control, servomechanism. (Laughs)29

CLASS INJURY: HATING THE POOR

As the above examples might suggest, with class supremacy comes class bigotry. Poverty is seen not only as the cause of vice but itself a vice. In societies that worship money and success, the losers become objects of scorn. Those who work the hardest for the least are called lazy. Those forced to live in substandard housing are thought to be the authors of substandard lives. Those who do not finish high school or cannot afford to go to college are considered deficient or inept.

Sometimes the poor are considered as less than human. The ruling castes in India thought the lower castes to be not a full-fledged part of humankind. Hence, their deprivation and misery, often caused by the exploitation perpetrated by the upper caste itself, elicited no compassion from the latter.[30] Since it was believed that the lower castes were paying for the sins of past lives, society was under no obligation to improve their lot. In modern India, the prejudiced attitudes of the ancient caste ideology "have been carried over to class relationships."[31] Since the fiercely unequal material conditions of the past still obtain today, so does the legitimating ideology.

In seventeenth-century England, impoverished people were thought to be not the victims of circumstances but of their own "idle, irregular and wicked courses," as one Puritan gentleman put it.[32] Then as now, the understanding was that the poor should not be enervated by public assistance but uplifted in character so that relief would be unnecessary. In the late eighteenth century, an upper-crust Philadelphia publication argued

against uplifting: "To give the meanest of the people an education beyond that station which providence has assigned them, is doing them a real injury. ... Having never known better things, they are contented with their lot. If their industry affords them only the plainest food and clothing, it is some compensation that they are perplexed with no other care."[33]

From the seventeenth century to today, laissez-faire economists have treated people in different social classes as requiring dissimilar incentives. For the rich to be enterprising, they must be fortified with subsidies, tax write-offs, and whatever else brings a high return on their investments. In contrast, the poor will exert themselves only if the dole and other income-support programs are eliminated and they are faced with deprivation. In other words, the rich work if they are given money, and the poor work if they have money kept from them. As one eighteenth-century English gentleman wrote, "Everyone but an idiot knows that the lower classes must be kept poor, or they will never be industrious."[34]

The British staff officers in World War I, "scions of wealthy and aristocratic houses," considered the enlisted ranks "to be made up of useless, shiftless men and treated them as such."[35] To be sure, such attitudes prevailed among the civilian population as well. Economist John Maynard Keynes denounced Marxism with undisguised class bigotry: "How can I adopt a creed which, preferring the mud to the fish, exalts the boorish proletariat above the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, who with all their faults, are the quality of life and surely carry the seeds of all human achievement?"[36]

Sounding much like Keynes, David Reisman and Nathan Glazer, two Harvard sociologists, wrote in 1964: "Slowness in altering opinion [is] characteristic of the lower classes. ... The less educated are always the more suspicious; they have in the course of life gained a peasant-like guile." The "uneducated masses" should learn to "practice deference and restraint which [are] understood and appreciated only among the well-to-do and highly educated strata." Reisman and Glazer also refer to the "poisonous tastes in politics and culture" of the "lower classes."[37] Another Harvard professor, political scientist Edward Banfield, claims that the poor are the source of much of their own troubles because they suffer from a "lower-class" mentality:

> The lower-class individual lives from moment to moment. ... Impulse governs his behavior, either because he cannot discipline himself to sacrifice a present for a future satisfaction or because he has no sense of the future. He is therefore radically improvident. ... His bodily needs (especially sex) and his taste for "action" take precedence over everything else—and certainly over any work routine. ... The lower-class person cannot as a rule be given much training because he will not accept it. ... But even if he does, his earning power will not be much increased because his class outlook and style of life will generally make him an unreliable and otherwise undesirable employee.[38]

For Banfield, the differences between White upper-middle-class suburban schools and impoverished inner-city schools are not due to staff inadequacy, racial discrimination, and inequitable funding. Rather, it is a matter of "class-cultural factors": the suburban children have a more orderly control of their impulses and know how to delay gratification.[39] With equal class chauvinism, the economist Felix Rohatyn explained that the economic gap between classes grew in the late 1970s and early 1980s partly because most of the children who went to public schools came from families that "fail to provide them with serious ethical principles."[40]

Unlike Banfield or Rohatyn, Jonathan Kozol actually taught in inner-city schools and visited public schools across the country. He found schools with five classes being conducted simultaneously in an assembly hall without wall dividers; classes with seventy pupils crowded in one room, with desks crammed halfway into the coat closet; classes that lacked books and school supplies; classes with no regular teachers that saw nineteen different substitutes in twenty days, some with no teachers at all, the students being warehoused in the gym or some other area, while someone stood watch over them. There were schools that regularly whipped the students for infractions and fired underpaid teachers who deviated in any interesting way from the stultifying curriculum; schools with roofs that were in such ill-repair that water drenched the rooms when it rained; schools that were squalid, filthy, overcrowded, and backed-up with sewage, with bathrooms that had no soap, water, or sinks.

Kozol also found many students who were demoralized by these conditions and asked for repairs and improvements, students who came from neighborhoods that had unusually high rates of child asthma, infant mortality, untreated disabilities, and malnutrition."[41] Rather than fashioning

theories about "class-culture" or "family ethics," Kozol concluded that impoverished schools suffered from a severe lack of money.

President Ronald Reagan referred to "the people who are sleeping on grates, the homeless who are homeless, you might say, by choice."[42] Anyone who actually takes the trouble to talk to the homeless will hear a different story: how difficult it is for them to change their condition, how they strenuously try to survive in the face of great hardship, how the safety nets have so shrunk, the cost of living so increased, and job opportunities so deteriorated that it is often impossible to feed and shelter oneself and one's family.[43]

In 1981, George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty* provided new reasons to cut social benefits for the poor and taxes for the rich. The book was profusely praised by conservative leaders and mainstream publications. Gilder argued —with a straight face—that "capitalism begins with giving. Not from greed, avarice, or even self-love can one expect the rewards of commerce, but from a spirit closely akin to altruism." Capitalism transforms the "gift impulse" into "creative investment" based on an awareness of "the needs of others."[44] The accumulation of great wealth is a creative process benefiting everyone. The poor, according to Gilder, are undermined by public-support programs and by their refusal to work hard."[45] To this day, persons comfortably ensconced in universities, think tanks, and on the staffs of prestigious publications and broadcast media conjecture about the pathology and dysfunction of the poor, and continue to produce books and articles explaining that poverty is caused by the unwillingness of the poor to work.[46]

Class bigotry, of course, is not uniquely American. Protracted armed struggle by the poor against the oligarchs in El Salvador evoked the undisguised class-hatred of the latter. When a Jesuit priest asked many children of affluent Salvadoran families what they thought would resolve the conflict, most of them said that "killing the poor" would end the war.[47]

In sum, for centuries privileged persons have assumed that a lowly class position has been congruous with the limited needs and tastes of "lowly people," borne of their own personal deficiencies in character and ambition. Charity only undermines their self-reliance, and imposes a drain on society.

Idleness is self-inflicted, for work is available for anyone who wants it.[48] Poverty is a matter of volition. "They do not want to better themselves" is a commonly heard refrain to this day. The poor live poorly because that is their preference, and if not their preference, then certainly it is the result of their spendthrift ways, moral underdevelopment, indolence, unwillingness to pursue self-improvement, inability to defer gratification, weak or nonexistent family structure, and dislike for hard work and education. For the privileged classes the problem has not been the exploitation and mistreatment of the poor, but the difficulties caused by the poor's reactions to such mistreatment.

It is not only the affluent and their propagandists who ascribe to this class bigotry. The strength of the elite ideology lies in its dissemination among broader publics, made all the easier by the ideology's monopoly access to the mass media. Many persons of middle and lower-middle income status, struggling to maintain their standard of living, are among the most fervent haters of the poor, imagining themselves as the prime victims of lower-class criminal depravity and of the favoritism shown to the poor by "tax-spend do-gooders."[49]

Some social scientists assert that the poor suffer from a "culture of poverty." By stressing "culture" (or "class-culture" as does Banfield) the privileged apologists can ignore *economic* class realities, such as low wages, high unemployment, regressive taxes, rent-gouging landlords, overpriced goods, and substandard or nonexistent community services. To be sure, among the poor can be found many demoralized, disheartened people, who are seriously damaged by the conditions of their lives. But where does the "culture of poverty" come from? Do the poor create it, or are they created by it? Is it not caused by material deprivation and exploitation? Doesn't poverty have anything to do with the lack of money, or is it all a matter of attitude and personal habit? The "culture of poverty" does not float about in a social vacuum. How then is it linked to and affected by the lopsided distribution of economic resources and political power? "Culture of poverty" theorists do not answer these questions. In fact, they never ask them.[50]

Other research gives us a different picture of the poor. They do have strong kinship ties (though these may differ from middle-class patterns). Often their families—however defined—are their sole survival unit. When the opportunity arises, they can be active in community protests and neighborhood councils. They think of the future, but it is usually with fear and concern for their children. They seldom provide for the future because they hardly have enough to get by in the present. When they can get work, they labor hard at tough, mindless, dead-end, low-paying jobs, be it in domestic labor, farm labor, factory labor, or low-level service occupations. They worry constantly about their lack of money and drug-infested neighborhoods. Given their limited means, they are no more—and usually less—immersed in self-gratification than affluent professionals.[51]

Far from lacking in aspiration, indigent people long for better lives, secure and good-paying jobs, affordable and pleasant housing, adequate medical care, a nice vacation, the chance to send their children to college, and a secure retirement. This does not mean they hunger for middle-class life, as such. The life of the poor, like most of the working class, "is demeaning not because its culture or values are inferior, but because of the lack of money, lack of opportunity, lack of job responsibility, lack of respect, lack of power—[that is] because of oppressive treatment of the working class by the higher classes."[52]

The children of low-income families also long for something better. Robert Coles, author of an extensive five-volume study of children in the United States, observed:

> The more time I spend talking with children, the more I am brought face-to-face with the question of class and its enormous influence. ... Class persuasively tells us what really counts in this life.
>
> Poor children, for example, have told me for years that they do indeed worry about extinction: hunger and malnutrition are their lot, and their drawings reveal again and again recognition of terrible vulnerability.[53]

The poor face all sorts of obstacles on the road to self-improvement, many placed there by the very people who chastise them for their indolence and

profligacy. Their children are sent to inferior schools and judged as "less intelligent" after taking IQ tests that are standardized with built-in class and ethnic biases.[54] Their neighborhoods are "redlined" by banks and denied capital for housing and businesses. Their young men and women are economic conscripts and fight the nation's wars in what is called a "volunteer army." Their streets are flooded with drugs—often distributed with the cooperation of corrupt law-enforcement authorities. Their protest movements, court challenges, consumer and business cooperatives, and electoral efforts are not applauded as assertive displays of self-help but are often met with hostility and even overt repression.[55] The way they are treated by officials, professionals, and service personnel is markedly worse than the way more prosperous people are treated. Thus, one doctor tells us: "My reaction to death is different, depending on the kid. If the kid, or the family, is bright, upwardly mobile, if the parents seem to understand what Tm talking about, then I'm more likely to be upset if that kid dies than with people [who] don't know what the hell I'm talking about."[56]

We hear that the poor must be made self-sufficient. But training programs designed to induce them to adopt a "work ethic" and develop employable skills are frequently misdirected because they assume the poor themselves are the problem, not the poverty and job market they face. One study found that a number of low-income people who return to school for training under public programs drop out before completion, even though they are performing well academically. One woman left because her 13-year-old son was beaten to death by an older boy and she could no longer apply herself; another had to go into hiding when her ex-husband threatened her with a butcher knife; another could no longer pay her babysitter when child-care checks stopped coming; and another found herself homeless after her father ran off with the rent money.[57]

Workfare programs, like the pronouncements of conservative professors and economists, fail to address the social and material realities of single parents surviving on public assistance. Much "job training" is for jobs that do not exist. What is needed is a massive investment in housing, education, day-care assistance, family health care, income support, public enterprises, and vigorous law enforcement and support systems to stop spousal abuse, child abuse, and drug infestation. The class bigotry and self-serving

ideologies promoted by society's more affluent element do not themselves create inequitable economic conditions, but they do play a vital role in legitimating and disguising the class system. A new approach to the economically oppressed will come only after we develop a more realistic and critical understanding of the class society that produces them.

PART III: Oppression and Conspiracy

CHAPTER 9: Racism and the Ideology of Slavery

Racism is the belief and practice of treating some ethnically distinct groups as biologically, socially, and morally inferior. Along with condemning it as an evil, we must try to comprehend what causes it. Here I want to discuss its roots in the earliest forms of tribal identity, in slavery and imperialism, and its functions in modern capitalist society.

TRIBAL "CAMPANILISMO"

The bonding of a band, clan, or tribe, operating together for mutual survival, leads to conflicts with other bands in the competition for food and territory.[1] With brotherhood comes "otherhood." In claiming a special link to one segment of humanity, we implicitly set ourselves apart from the rest. That is not the only possiblity nowadays. In modern times, we can feel pride and attachment for a particular ethnic group and still be internationalists. But in tribal times the idea of a universal humanity was quite incomprehensible. The dominant mentality was steeped in parochialism and territoriality. The Italians have a term for the provincialism of their peasantry: *campanilismo,* which might be translated as "rule of the bell." One's loyalty extended only as far as one could hear the campanile, the bell tower of one's village church. Beyond that, one was in alien territory.

With or without an actual church bell, *campanilismo* was the common mentality of most peoples, until well into the modern era. As late as 1966, I visited hill people in Appalachia who talked distrustfully about the denizens of the neighboring "holler," warning me to watch out for them because they were "no good people." I heard the same warnings in every holler I visited about the people in adjacent locales. In each instance, my informants were referring to fellow-Appalachians who in ethnicity, physical appearance, custom, language, class, religion, and every other aspect were indistinguishable from themselves. Conflicts arise not only between strangers but just as frequently between those most proximate and often much like ourselves. Shakespeare gives us the Capulets and Montagues.

Real life gives us the Guelphs and Ghibellines, the Iroquois and Algonquin, the Hatfields and McCoys.

People of the same stock can be ferociously set against each other because of class, regional, religious, and cultural issues.[2] Louis-Adolphe Thiers and his army were as much French as the revolutionary workers of the Paris Commune whom they slaughtered in such great numbers in 1871, demonstrating how relatively homogeneous nations can be torn by class warfare. No common blood bond prevented Anglo-Protestant factory owners from overworking and underpaying their Anglo-Protestant employees in England and the United States. And Chinese sweatshop owners in the United States did not hesitate to exploit Chinese immigrant labor.

I would not argue that ethnic conflict is an inevitable or dominant human proclivity, but it exists as a powerful force and is, unfortunately, still very much with us. Recall the song from the Rodgers and Hammer-stein Broadway musical South Pacific: "You've got to be taught to hate and fear/ You've got to be taught from year to year/ It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear/ You've got to be carefully taught." I am suggesting just the contrary: You've got to be carefully taught not to hate and fear. Recent research indicates that "letting children be children" does not always ensure the absence of prejudice, not in a society that has so much of it to begin with. Children start to notice and react to sexual and racial differences and physical deviancies and disabilities rather early. Researchers conclude that conscious effort and an affirming framework are needed in multicultural situations.[3]

FROM DEUTERONOMY TO THE GOOD SAMARITAN

In tribal times, the alien was perceived as an enemy, a moral inferior, not fully human or, in any case, not to be treated the same as one's own clanspeople, someone who when captured in war could be killed or enslaved. The operational ethic was set down in the Old Testament by Yahweh, better known as the Lord Jehovah, a tribal god if ever there was one. In Deuteronomy 2:32-35, Moses tells us (assuming Moses *did* write

the first five books of the Bible) how Yahweh lends a homocidal helping hand to his "chosen people":

> Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Ja-haz. And the Lord our God delivered him before us: and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people.
>
> And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain.
>
> Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took.

The "Lord our God" Yahweh also delivers King Og and the people of Ba-shan into the hands of Moses' warriors, so they might "utterly destroy the men, women, and children of every city" of that kingdom, too.[4] (Some people might be less inclined to treat the Bible with such reverence were they to trouble themselves by actually reading some of its more unsavory passages.)

Deuteronomy shows there is one ethical code governing relations among one's own people and another for outsiders, whose extermination is seen not only as an unfortunate necessity but an elevated endeavor, a carrying out of God's will. The parallel to the mythology of modern-day nationalism should be evident. The killing of one's own is murder, a crime to be punished. The killing of others during a nation-state war is hailed as an act of patriotic devotion.[5]

Over the centuries, other more hopeful themes emerged. In the Bible itself, a millenium after Deuteronomy, we get the parable of the Good Samaritan. In Luke 11:25, Jesus is drawn into argument by a lawyer, who questions what it means to "love thy neighbor as thyself," for how is he to know "who is my neighbor?" So Jesus tells of the man from Jerusalem who is set upon by thieves who beat him, rob him of everything, and leave him half dead. Passers-by ignore his pleas for help. Then "a certain Samaritan" stops, binds up his wounds, takes him to an inn, and administers to him. "Which of these three thinkest thou was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?" asks Jesus. The lawyer has to concede it was the Samaritan.

The story must have startled Jesus' audience. The idea that a Samaritan, a member of a rival tribe, might be considered an object of brotherly love was something of a revolutionary notion in a world ruled mostly by the older ethnocentric code. Jesus' message was: All of us are one in God's eyes. Put aside tribal rivalry and embrace universal brotherhood.

Note, there is nothing said about sisterhood in all this. Women had no distinct identity apart from their roles as devoted adjuncts to father, husband, family, and tribe. A universalist identity of womanhood was unthinkable and is visibly emerging after much struggle only in modern times. The next time we celebrate International Women's Day (March 8), we might recognize what a vital and revolutionary advance it is to commemorate universal sisterhood, even—or especially—in a world where millions of women still endure dreadful victimization.

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SLAVERY

To gain comfort, abundance, and freedom from drudgery and toil, some people devise ways of living well off the labor of others. Ethno-centrism and racism make it easier to enslave foreigners for that purpose. By late horticultural society, slavery becomes an important source of surplus accumulation. Small holdings are replaced by large agricultural estates that can be profitably serviced by forced labor. As slavery develops, so too does the ideology in its defense.

Since slavery has long disappeared from history and since we all agree it was a horrible practice, why give it any attention now? There are several reasons. First of all, many people are not aware that it was such a horrible practice. In an American history textbook widely used during the 1940s and 1950s, two prominent historians could write about the antebellum South: "The majority of slaves were adequately fed, well cared for and apparently happy."[6] As late as 1974, in a much publicized award-winning work, another pair of historians argued that slaves in the Old South advanced in skills and occupational status under the incentives offered by their masters. Life on the old plantation was not all that bad.[7]

Furthermore, slavery has not passed into history. A United Nations commission named more than a score of countries in which forced labor still exists.[8] And much of what passes for "free labor" in the Third World is still conducted under conditions akin to slavery. Also, slavery reveals—in magnified fashion—the nature of class society, how ruling interests are willing to reduce other human beings to utter misery in order to live well off their labor. Finally, for our purposes, the practice and ideology of slavery tell us something important about the virulence of racism.

The earliest surviving defense of slavery is from the fourth century B.C. by the great philosopher Aristotle, who proves himself not so great on this question. He maintains that "some men are slaves by nature, and others are freemen." By the condition of their souls, some are inferior to others. This being so, it is "advantageous to both parties for this man to be a slave and that to be a master."[9] The existing social hierarchy is to Aristotle prima facie proof that those on top are most able and those at the bottom are less so. Writing before Aristotle, Plato tirelessly offered in his Republic and other writings the Socratic theme that each man must perform functions proper to his station and his nature, it being presumed that persons of a lower class were also of a lower nature.

Aristotle allows that slavery sometimes is a matter of unfortunate circumstance, as when "men of the noblest families" are "taken prisoners in war and sold." Persons of such class background are not slaves "by nature" and should not be so considered.[10] He seems not to realize that all slaves, not just a few captive nobles, are the products of forced circumstances—be it conquest, abduction, poverty, or birth.

This defense of human exploitation is endlessly repeated down through the ages: slavery is "good and just" not only for the enslavers who live so well but for the chattels. Slaves do best for society and themselves by accepting their servitude rather than aspiring for a freedom that does not suit their innately inferior nature. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle did what class ideologists have done ever since: they argued that relations between rich and poor, privileged and underprivileged, were an inevitable manifestation of nature itself rather than something created by social convention, inheritance, economic exploitation, and state power. "Even the greatest

philosophers may share the blinkers of their time, where clearer vision would threaten a property right."[11]

Some might argue that it is unrealistic to expect Aristotle to be free of the "blinkers" of his day. Slave labor was the normal mode of surplus accumulation. To criticize Aristotle for accepting what was then an acceptable institution is to be guilty of what historians call the sin of "presentism," the anachronistic imposition of present-day standards upon a thoroughly different historical era.

In response to that argument, it should be pointed out that, indeed, Aristotle's era was much unlike our own but not completely so. Were it utterly different in every conceivable way, then its social arrangements, literature, politics, and philosophy would be incomprehensible to us. In fact they are not; there is much in them that transcends the fixedness of time and place so as to be a source of recognizable interest and enrichment. Furthermore, the enslavement of human beings is a human horror that transcends any era. If we can critically judge Greek literature and philosophy, we can critically judge Greek slavery and the self-serving justifications put forth by Greek enslavers.

In any case, even in ancient Attica, slavery did not go completely unchallenged. From the third century B.C., we have fragments from the Stoic Chrysippus, who wrote that slavery was "not according to nature."[12] The Sophist Alcidamas, in a fragmentary note, is quoted as saying: "God has left all men free. Nature had made none a slave."[13] In Aristotle's day, slavery must have been a source of contention, for why else would he have felt compelled to defend it? In his Politics, he acknowledges unnamed critics who hold the "contrary opinion" that "all slavery is contrary to nature."[14] If a defender of slavery like Aristotle could be challenged in his day, it is not anachronistic to challenge him today.

In addition, in every slave society I know of, there was another rather large group of individuals who detested slavery: the slaves themselves. Their sentiments seem never to be taken into account in debates about anachronism and presentism. Instead, we are urged to accept a society "on its own terms." But to do so is to accept its dominant ideology, its

prevailing class arrangements, values, and practices, and to ignore whatever victims it might produce. To acknowledge slavery uncritically as "an institution of its time" is to ignore the humanity of the slave and the injustices inflicted by one class upon another—of a kind that no culture can justify. Uncritically accepting the dominant ideology of other societies is no more an indication of objectivity than is accepting the dominant ideology of this society.

In the ancient world, slaves had few opportunities to promulgate learned tracts against the institution of slavery, but their rebellions spoke volumes. Consider the mass uprising of the Messenian helots in the seventh century B.C. against Sparta, which turned into a protracted war and led to the transformation of Sparta into the barracks state familiar to us. Outnumbered ten to one by their helots, the Spartans developed a militarized society that exerted totalitarian control over every citizen from birth to old age, a system designed to deny most private enjoyments, including the attachments to spouse and family.[15]

There is the comforting belief that oppressors are themselves oppressed because, in treating others badly, they violate their own humanity and so suffer from their own tyranny. One can be skeptical of this view. Most oppressors live lavishly well at the expense of those beneath them—which is the whole point of the oppression. In the case of Sparta, however, the dominators did seem to pay an inordinately high price for their hegemony. As a harsh barracks state of perpetual soldiers, whose function was to defend the polis from its own slaves, Sparta provides us with an example of how oppressors become oppressed by their own institutions.

Besides the Messenians, there are other examples of slave resistance.[16] Best known among these was the uprising against Rome led by Spartacus in 73-71 B.C., in which over 100,000 slaves were reportedly killed, including the six thousand prisoners crucified along the Via Appia, a morbid monument to the horrors of class oppression erected by the Roman aristocracy. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of our own era, there were slave rebellions in Santo Domingo (Haiti), Jamaica, Cuba, and in the American South; dramatic events that have been largely ignored by our educators and media.

It is often thought that Christianity challenged the practice of slavery. Not so. Despite the universalist theme of the Good Samaritan, the New Testament either keeps its silence or actually endorses bondage. In Ephesians 6:5, Paul instructs those in servitude to "be obedient to them that are your masters ... with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ." The post-apostolic writings also admonish slaves to serve their masters "as a counterpart of God." St. Ignatius insists that slaves should "not wish to be set free at the public cost, lest they become slaves of lust." St. Augustine allowed that slavery was an evil, but he considered it God's punishment upon mankind for the sin of Adam. He remained untroubled that the punishment was so selectively applied. For St. Ambrose, slavery was a beneficial path to rectitude, for "the lower the station in life, the more exalted the virtue." (Ambrose, however, did not seek to exalt his own virtue by placing himself in servitude.)

The early Christian church often refused to baptize slaves without the consent of their masters. For centuries, the Church itself owned large numbers of slaves. Persons held in bondage were debarred from ordination into holy orders, for as an early pope and saint, Leo I, noted, "[T]he sacred ministry is polluted by such vile company, and the rights of owners are violated."[18] Occasionally, Christian writers condemned the enslavement of Christians—but they accepted the enslavement of pagans, a practice that was especially praiseworthy if it led to forced conversion. Hence, a connection grew up between slave traffickers and Christian missionaries from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.[19]

To justify enslavement of some of God's children, God's support has been enlisted. As recently as twenty years ago, clergy in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa still used the Bible (Genesis 9:18-27; Joshua 9:21-27) to defend apartheid, arguing that Blacks were considered the children of Ham and therefore destined to be "the hewers of wood and drawers of water."

If the slaveholders of antiquity and the slaveholders of the Old South had anything in common, it was (1) their claim that their slaves were benefiting from and contentedly suited to their station in life, and (2) their terror of being massacred by their contented, happy slaves. Slave owners in antiquity

lived in perpetual fear they might perish at the hands of their slaves. In the words of the younger Pliny, slaves were the purveyors of "dangers, insults, and outrages" along with other "wickedness."[20] Likewise, the slaveholders of the antebellum South repeatedly expressed their apprehensions about the terrible vengeance that rebellious slaves might wreak upon them. In 1793, Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Monroe, a fellow enslaver, "It is high time we should forsee the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves ... [will] have to wade through, and try to avert them."[21]

At one time or another, the Southern aristocrats feared their slaves might be incited to insurrection by French, Spanish, or British agents, or by Northern abolitionists. They feared that slaves would ally with the Indians or any other enemy during wartime (which sometimes did happen). They feared, in the words of one, "to see the tragic events of Santo Domingo repeated in our own land,"[22]—the "tragic events" being the triumph of liberty over tyranny in the form of a successful slave rebellion. In response to "these perilous times of insurrection," the slaveholders passed laws saying that chattels could carry no arms, clubs, or staves, nor make unauthorized visits to other plantations, nor learn to read or write, nor hold religious services of their own, nor engage in secret meetings, nor congregate in unauthorized groups of more than three or four.[23]

The enslavers overworked their slaves from dawn to dusk and sometimes late into night, underfed them, forced them to live in miserable hovels, broke their hearts by selling off children from parents, flogged them mercilessly for insubordination or failing to work hard enough, drastically cut their rations when they got old, forced bred them, terrorized, tortured and raped them, hunted them down when they escaped, and sometimes killed them.[24]

All the while, the enslavers and their propagandists emphasized how it was the masters who made most of the sacrifices, sparing no paternalistic effort and expense to care for the Blacks and uplift them from their African barbarism. The opinion of one Confederate militant and presidential assassin, John Wilkes Booth, is not atypical:

> I, for one, have ever considered [slavery] one of the greatest blessings (both for themselves and us) that God ever bestowed upon a favored nation. Witness heretofore our wealth and power; witness their elevation and enlightment above their race elsewhere. ... Yet Heaven knows, no one would be more willing to do more for the negro race than I, could I but see a way to *still better their condition*.[25] [emphasis in the original]

Built upon the whip, gun, chain, and rope, slave society presented itself as a natural, happy, and mutually beneficial social arrangement. In fact, slavery may not have been all that natural, even for those who enjoyed its wealth and other advantages. Writing about his life as a slave, Frederick Douglass reflects on the character of his "old master—Capt. Anthony," who could "when it suited him, appear to be literally insensible to the claims of humanity." Having unlimited power over others, Capt. Anthony could treat trifling faults as momentous offenses when feeling so inclined. Douglass wonders why his master was so incapable of compassion: "Was he dead to all sense of humanity? No. I think I now understand it. [His behavior] is part of the system, rather than a part of the man."[26]

Rather than damning the slave owner, Douglass is more interested in condemning the system that produces that kind of behavior. His may not be the only moral stance to take, but it is sociologically the most insightful. He observes that this same master, capable of cruel and dark deeds, also had a mild and gentle side—although "mildness and gentleness were not the prevailing or governing traits of his character. These excellent qualities were displayed only occasionally."

If Douglass refuses to blame the slave owner's personality for slavery, it is not because he is such a forgiving person who cannot think ill of another man nor harbor hatred in his heart. In fact, he has quite a bit of anger and hatred in his heart but it is for the corrupting system that encourages the merciless, limitlessly self-interested impulses of human character. He expresses it well:

> [Capt. Anthony] was not by nature worse than other men. Had he been brought up in a free state, surrounded by the just restraints of free society—restraints which are necessary to the freedom of all its members, alike and equally—Capt. Anthony might have been as humane a man, and every way as respectable, as many who now oppose the slave system; certainly as humane and respectable as are members of society generally. The slaveholder, as well as the

> slave, is the victim of the slave system. A man's character greatly takes its hue and shape from the form and color of things about him. Under the whole heavens there is no relation more unfavorable to the development of honorable character than that sustained by the slaveholder to the slave. Reason is imprisoned here, and passions run wild. ... The pleasant moods of a slaveholder are remarkably brittle; they are easily snapped; they neither come often, nor remain long. His temper is subjected to perpetual trials; but since these trials are never borne patiently, they add nothing to his natural stock of patience.[27]

Douglass is reminding us that oppressors are corrupted by the power that puts no restraints on their desires, and that much of what we call "personality" is influenced in its expression by the wider social order. So it is not enough to condemn the social actor; we must confront the class system—in this case slavery—that breeds his or her actions. It is not enough to condemn the racist because racism is more than an individual attitude.

The travails of slavemasters like Capt. Anthony should not be overstated. In fact, the plantation aristocrats, who hired overseers to carry out the more unpleasant and unsavory slavedriving tasks, usually found life to be wonderful on the old plantation. They knew it and often said so.[28] They devoted themselves to hunting, dueling, riding, courting, whoring, sporting, gambling, traveling, drinking, feasting, and partying. But they also knew that "most of what made Southern life such a dream of delicious self-indulgence was built on black servitude."[29]

In their life-style they were the farthest thing from the Spartan ruling class. Yet they resembled the Spartans in two ways. First, they did not work and considered labor to be demeaning. (This is something that does not quite come across in Gone With the Wind: Scarlett O'Hara and all her male and female friends, even the saintly Ashley Wilkes, never worked a day in their lives.)

Second, the South, with its city police and country patrols of armed men on horseback, was something of an armed camp like Sparta, designed to safeguard itself against its slave population. As Aptheker records, across the South there were well-armed militia and voluntary paramilitary organizations. A British scientist visiting the region in 1796 remarked of the Caucasian males, "The fact is, they are all soldiers." Indeed, almost all of

them were obliged to do patrol service. Over a half-century later, Frederick Law Olmsted noted the existence "everywhere" in the South of an ever-ready military armed force "invested with more arbitrary and cruel power than any police in Europe." Nineteenth-century historians like Henry Adams and Rosser Taylor commented on the prevalence of militarism in the South and its importance in preserving the slave system. Another historian writes, "The constant possibility of insurrection required that attention should ever be given to the militia."[30] Treated today as an idiosyncratic cultural trait of that region, the South's "military tradition" arose originally out of the necessities of class-race oppression.

After Emancipation, the erstwhile slaveholders expressed outrage at the "ingratitude" shown by ex-slaves who joyously proclaimed their freedom, plundered the plantations, and tried to claim ownership to the land they had worked for generations. Equally "horrid" were the ones who fled to the Union lines and joined the Union army. After the Civil War, vengeful Southerners engaged in widespread arson, beatings, killings, and terrorization of the Black population.[31] With that remarkable self-serving capacity that has been the mark of every privileged class in history, they could reverse the roles of victim and victimizer in their own minds. In his trip through the South immediately after the war, journalist Whitelaw Reid noted the refrain repeated endlessly by former slaveholders: "We have been the best friends the nigger ever had. Yet this is the way they treat us."[32]

No one in the South worked harder than those of African descent, yet they were said to be lazy and shiftless. Emancipation did little to change that opinion. As one observer commented: "It is not an uncommon thing to see five or six of these young aristocrats, who never worked a day in their lives, and who are depending on bank stock which is [no longer] worth a cent, cursing and damning the negroes for not working."[33]

THE FUNCTIONS OF RACISM

Engels once noted that ancient slavery left its "poisonous sting" long after it had passed into history. The same could be said of servitude in our own country. One of the poisonous aftereffects of slavery is racism, a point so obvious that it is often overlooked. As already noted, fear and hatred of

other ethnic groups antedate slavery. But with the advent of slavery, racism worked its way into law and ideology. In ancient Attica, most slaves were deracinated foreigners, better known as "barbarians," and were accorded the contemptuous term *andrapoda* (man-footed creature), a dehumanizing, racist designation suggesting biological inferiority.[34] In contrast, the Athenian opponents of slavery protested the notion that barbarians were inferior to Greeks. Whether they consciously realized it or not, in opposing slavery they also opposed racism. In Rome, the patrician philosopher (and slaveowner) Cicero stigmatized Syrians and Jews as "peoples born for slavery," thus giving servitude a racial blood delineation rather than treating it as a matter of circumstance and ill-fortune.[35]

In the Old South, the laws intended to protect slavery also codified racial supremacy: slave status was restricted to nonwhites and interracial marriage was banned.[36] Theories were fashioned regarding racial psychology and physiology, including skin pigmentation. By 1750 or so, as the need to defend slavery became more urgent, "curiosity and supposition about racial distinctions gave way to certainty and dogmatism; respect for differences became contempt and even hatred; attempts to reason gave way to racism."[37] The African slave was portrayed as congenitally irresponsible, indolent, childlike, devious, dangerous, primitive, inferior in intelligence, and not fully human.

It was long maintained—even among some of the abolitionists—that the slave was not fit for immediate freedom. Therefore, emancipation should be gradual. But if not fit for freedom, then slaves must remain in bondage forever, for it was the system of slavery itself that was preventing them from becoming fit for anything but slavery. After emancipation, "not fit for freedom" became—and remains to this day—"not fit for equality."[38]

Slavery and racism go together because they bolster the same oppressive class relationships. Why did the colonizers forcibly bring African people to the Western Hemisphere? Was it to add warmth and color to their joyless Calvinist lives? More likely, it was to gain access to a profitable work force and live splendidly off the superexploitation of African labor. The White colonizers abducted Black people to toil on land they stole from Red and Brown people.

Speaking of stolen lands, racism is a by-product not only of slavery but of imperialism. The imperialists were not out to victimize darker peoples per se. They readily exploited persons of any color. In fact, the earliest regions upon which the Western powers imposed economic underdevelopment were Eastern Europe in the sixteenth century and Ireland long before that, both populated by Caucasians.[39] If the imperialists exploited darker peoples, it was for economic gain, but in short order they rationalized their atrocities in racist terms. As they invaded Africa, Asia, and the Americas to plunder the land, burn crops, destroy herds, incinerate villages and townships, and slaughter and enslave the inhabitants, the colonizers had to deny the humanity of their victims and ascribe to them the very homicidal ferocity and savagery they delivered upon them.

There were rare exceptions. One inhabitant of Plymouth Bay colony from 1627 to 1645, the pleasure-loving Thomas Morton, took the trouble to fraternize with the "Massachusetts Indian[s]" and found them "more full of humanity than the Christians." They were neither dangerous nor mischievous nor dull "as some have thought." In fact, Morton found them to be subtle and intelligent, possessing an admirable competence in farming, hunting, midwifery, and medicine, and living rich and contended lives.

Morton also celebrated the wonders of the land, the forests skillfully cleared of underbrush and transformed into hunting parks by the Indians, the great flocks of ducks and wild turkeys and herds of venison that passed by, the rivers and bays teeming with fish, the oyster banks a mile long, the endless beds of mussels and clams, the "many goodly groves of trees, dainty fine round rising hillucks, delicate faire large plaines, sweete cristall fountaines, and cleare running streams."[40]

But where Morton wanted to fraternize, the Puritan Saints of Plymouth Bay wanted to colonize. Where Morton saw a fecund and beautiful land "with all her faire indowments," the Puritans saw only a godless, howling wilderness filled with evil spirits and "dangerous wild beasts," a land they hated—until they could subdue and transmogrify it into personal property. Where Morton saw a friendly, intelligent, indigenous people, the Puritans saw "brutes," "devils," and "devil worshippers," whose souls were to be consigned to their proper place in hell by a process of extermination. The

new settlers abused the natives' hospitality, defaced their graves, massacred their tribes, and exulted that God was pleased to smite his heathen enemies "and give us their lands for Inheritance," with the choice properties going to the Endicotts, Winthrops, Underbills, Bradfords and others whose New England patrician names are still familiar to us today."[41] It is remarkable how often "pleasing God" became a matter of murder and real-estate acquisition.

The Puritans' extermination of the Pequot tribe was a genocidal act that was to be repeated again and again by other colonizers against Indian nations and Third World peoples. As the victims of imperialism were exterminated, so were they demonized and dehumanized with racist terminology. During the Black Hawk War of 1832, in which the men, women, and children of the Sauk tribe were systematically slaughtered, there was talk of "fast getting rid of those demons in human shape" and exterminating the "wretched wanderers" who were more "like the wild beasts than man."[42] George Washington likened the "red savages" to wolves, "both being beasts of prey, though they differ in shape." While colonizing and slaughtering the people of Southwest Africa in 1900-10, the German imperialists described them as "baboons." In his poem, *The White Man's Burden*, Rudyard Kipling referred to the Asian victims of British imperialism as "Half-devil, half child." In 1897, Winston Churchill judged Afghans to be "dangerous and as sensible as mad dogs, fit to be treated as such" and recommended the use of poison gas against them. British Prime Minister Lloyd George said his government retained the right "to kill niggers" (he was referring to Asians and Africans). To justify U.S. overseas expansionism, American presidents talked of the "Anglo-Saxon" obligation to "uphft and civilize" inferior peoples, as President William McKinley said of the Filipinos and President Woodrow Wilson of the Latin Americans.[43]

Note, these racist pronouncements issued not from Bubba or Joe Redneck but from the most eminent members of society, the upper-class gentlemen, the leaders and patricians, the imperialists.

To this day, racists explain away the inferior social status of people of color by treating it as a manifestation of their inferior biological and mental capacities rather than as something fostered within the socioeconomic

system itself. Since Emancipation, racist beliefs have persisted both as a cause and a justification of oppressive class-race conditions. Lynch-mob terrorism, sharecropper poverty, limited or nonexistent job opportunities, substandard education and housing, and discrimination in all walks of life were symptomatic of long-standing racist attitudes, but also of the social conditions of scarcity, competition, class power, and work-force exploitation. In other words, racism has been not just an internalized personal attitude but an externalized *social relation* that continually bolsters the very conditions that make it so functional.

Discussions of racism usually fix upon attitudes. Why do people feel that way? I have already acknowledged the human proclivity for ethnic conflict, but we should also keep in mind the larger system of power and interest that sustains racist attitudes. The problem of ethnic oppression is not purely one of "hearts and minds." It has a class-structural component that operates with independent effect. In modern-day capitalist society, racism serves a number of systemic functions.

First, employers have always desired a surplus work force. When there is full employment and labor is relatively scarce, workers can command better pay. But higher wages cut into profits. Conversely, when workers are in superabundant supply in an overcrowded job market, then wages can be kept down and the work force more easily expanded and contracted according to seasonal demands and business cycles. For generations, women, children, and immigrants served as a "reserve army of labor," increasing the competition for jobs and depressing wages; so too have people of color. By keeping African Americans, Latinos, and others in an ethnically delineated underclass, racism helps to secure the reserve army of labor and relegates its victims to the low-wage sector of the labor force in disproportionate numbers.

Second, underclass ethnics, the *plebs urbana* of modern America, victimized by racism in education and occupational opportunities, are more likely to do the "dirty work" of society. It is often the only work they can get; the grubby, unpleasant, unhealthy, and grossly underpaid jobs that better organized, skilled workers are reluctant to take. Racism helps to create a "superexploitation" that allows the investor to accumulate wealth at

an even greater rate of return on an especially disadvantaged sector of the work force.[44]

Third, as already noted, when any sector of the work force is underpaid, this has a constricting effect on all wage levels. An ethnically delineated underclass then becomes the object of resentment among White workers, who blame their own underemployment and income losses on Blacks, Latinos, recent immigrants, or whomever, rather than on their bosses.

Fourth, racism helps keep the working class fragmented and disorganized. The dominant interests are safest when workers are busy fighting each other for crumbs rather than concerting for a larger shce of the pie. Economic elites seem well aware of this, for they consciously discourage working-class unity and incite interethnic competition. Historically, they have sought to divide and rule. Racism serves the interests of the few by dividing the many against themselves. Some Greek and Roman writers, including Plato and Aristotle, stressed the desirability of importing slaves of different nationalities and languages as a necessary means of preventing them from coalescing in rebellion. Aristotle writes: "The husbandmen should by all means be slaves, not of the same nation, or men of any spirit; for thus they would be laborious in their business, and safe from attempting any novelties."[45]

European invaders of Africa and North America used bribes, deception, threats, and gifts of firearms to play off tribe against tribe.[46] In seventeenth-century America, before the laws and ideologies of slavery and racism were well developed. White indentured servants and Black slaves not only worked together but fraternized and seemed notably unconcerned about differences in skin color. That laws had to be passed prohibiting racial mixing testifies to the prevalence of such relations.

Slaveholders endured a "lively fear" that indentured servants would join with Blacks or Indians in uprisings against the propertied class—as happened more than once. So the colonial governments pursued a deliberate policy of creating aversions between the three racial groups, turning Indians against Blacks, and poor Whites against both.[47]

In the postbellum era, the Ku Klux Klan was used by bosses to terrorize labor combinations and keep Whites and Blacks at odds. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, industrial firms consciously promoted disunity and hostility among immigrant groups in the company towns, even going so far as to deliberately mix work teams with Swedes, Poles, Hungarians, Irish, and others in the very manner advocated by Aristotle.[48] In U.S. prisons, officials consciously have promoted friction between White and Black inmates, doing everything to discourage unity among them.[49] The same strategies are used by urban police forces in regard to street gangs.[50]

Racism deflects the anger of Caucasian workers away from their wealthy and privileged employers and toward persons of different ethnicity but similar class. Racism also serves the interests of right-wing political leaders who are ever on the lookout for "cultural" issues such as crime in the streets, busing, school prayers, flag burning, abortion, gay bashing, pornography, and the like, issues that blur class lines, incite working people against each other, and distract attention from economic policies.

In the 1988 electoral campaign, when the Republicans ran notorious race-based television ads designed to stoke White resentment about Black crime and job quotas (the practice of reserving some portion of occupational slots for ethnic minorities), they were operating in the time-tested ruling-class tradition of setting race against race. Republican presidential candidate George Bush repeatedly hit on such divisive racist themes, albeit in sometimes coded fashion.[51] In 1991, Republican leaders repudiated erstwhile Nazi-Klansman David Duke, who was running for governor of Louisiana after winning the Republican primary. But they continued to make the same veiled appeals as he. Duke, himself, correctly noted that his campaign stances—opposing affirmative action, attacking women's reproductive rights, emphasizing crime enforcement (against Blacks), defending the rights of (White) middle Americans, cutting welfare spending—were no different from the positions advocated by the national Republican party. Duke repeatedly asserted he was a good mainstream Republican, and indeed he was. Racial hatred is too useful a weapon to be left exclusively in the hands of hate groups.

In conclusion, we should recall that racism is usually seen as an aberrant, irrational output of a basically rational social system. Actually, it more often is the other way around: racism is the rational outcome of a basically irrational and certainly unjust system of privilege and power. Much of politics is the rational manipulation of irrational symbols. Racist sentiments are consciously orchestrated by ruling elites.

The one ray of hope amidst this dreadful history is the fitful and incomplete progression from servitude toward liberation, legal equality, and economic democracy. In recent decades, against all the violent legacies of slavery and racism, against all the institutional and systemic forces that batten on racism, against a racist culture propagated by news and entertainment media, against the laws of state governments that propagated Jim Crow and protected racial terrorism, against a do-nothing federal government that looked the other way for so long—afraid of "offending the South," and a White House leadership through the 1980s and early 1990s that continued to incite racial resentments—against all this and more, there were and still are people who have organized, educated, and agitated for equality and social justice, Black and White together, fighting with righteous determination—not only on behalf of people of color but for our common humanity, our universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

CHAPTER 10: Race and the Hidden Dimension of Class

There is nothing wrong with treating class, race, gender, culture, and other such things as distinct from each other, for in many respects they are. The mistake is to consider them unconnected and mutually exclusive. In formal logic, all things are either A or not-A, either the same or different but not both. But in the real world, concepts like class, politics, race, economics, and culture overlap, being different in many particulars but part of the same overall systemic dynamic.[1]

CLASS OR RACE—OR BOTH?

Progressive people often ask, what is more important, race, class, or gender? Who is more oppressed? At a meeting in Washington, D.C., I once heard a White feminist tell an African-American male speaker, "You may be Black but you don't know what it means to be a woman." He responded, "You may be a woman but you're still White." At other meetings one can hear people aver that gays are the most oppressed group or that no one has suffered more than Native American Indians. Passed over in these largely middle-class debates are the poor and working people of all ethnic groups, genders, and sexual orientations.

These exchanges might be called "oppression competition." They represent an unfortunate but understandable tendency to give greater urgency to the afflictions of one's own cohort than to the disadvantages endured by others. With so many injustices competing for attention, gaining the support of broader constituencies is no mean accomplishment, and can best be achieved by emphasizing the magnitude of one's own oppression. In a zero-sum world, scarce resources allotted to other struggles might mean less for one's own. These competitive tendencies are all the more readily indulged when there is an absence of class analysis, when various groups fail to see that—for all their historical and social differences—they are confronting a commonly oppressive social structure.[2]

Working-class Whites have been criticized for clinging to "their illusory White-skin privilege" by voting for conservative White candidates and against progressive African Americans.[3] But is it merely a matter of skin-color bonding or is there a class dimension to the problem? The gross inequities created by capitalism provide fertile soil for bigotry, making Whites more receptive to racist views, making them resent both the "special treatment" supposedly rendered to impoverished minorities and the gains made by successful African Americans.[4] Having to compete with other ethnic groups for scraps off the table, many Whites fear that an African-American mayor or president will favor their "own kind," resulting in less for Whites; less access to patronage, jobs, police protection, city services, decent housing, safe neighborhoods, and adequately funded schools—and more taxes.[5]

Are the fears of White workers grounded in reality? Do they have a material interest in siding with racism? On the contrary, they definitely have an interest in not losing sight of their class interest and not getting sidetracked by racist images and fears. As already noted, racism divides workers and leaves them less capable of unified action when struggling against management for better wages and work conditions. Only by putting aside ethnic differences are workers able to perceive that their real enemies are those who live so lavishly off their labor.

Conservatives would argue otherwise: workers should not be concerned about struggle but about being more cooperative with management. Ours is not a zero-sum society. More for the rich does not mean less for working people. As the pie gets larger, so do the slices for everyone, conservatives claim. In reality, despite substantial growth of the economy from 1980 to 1992, real wages declined for workers while income and wealth increased dramatically for the uppermost brackets.[6] The rich get richer when the poor get poorer. Not class collaboration but class struggle is the name of the game.

Historically, that portion of the work force consigned to an inferior status because of race or gender are superexploited, forced to accept any kind of employment under almost any conditions. The low pay they must accept drags on the wage levels of the entire work force. Conversely, the political

and economic gains won by African-American, Latino, and female workers often benefit White male workers by lifting wage scales in general. When minorities win open admissions to public universities, this also benefits low-income White students who otherwise might not be able to gain entry. When people of color defeat nepotism in craft unions and win special apprenticeship programs, this opens the way for unskilled White workers who also have been deprived of such opportunities.[7]

When torn by racial animosity, workers are more prone to follow right-wing political candidates who pose as their champions by playing upon their racial-class fears, and less likely to support progressive candidates who might serve their common interests. Far from being hurt or neglected by progressive officeholders who are also Black or Latino or Asian or whatever ethnicity. White workers generally fair better with them than with conservatives.

The resurgence of racism does not mean class oppression is less important. Quite the opposite. The growing virulence of racism goes hand in hand with deepening class divisions. As already noted, racism is more than just an attitude that arises spontaneously among narrow-minded people. It is cultivated by dominant-class interests to discourage working-class unity and divide people from each other. Historically, the role of hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi party has been to channelize legitimate working- and middle-class grievances in the direction of irrelevant foes, such as African Americans, Jews, feminists, immigrants, communists, or labor unions. Klan and Nazi leaders target just about anybody except capitalist-class oppressors.

Labor struggles in the United States over the last century have been characterized both by divisive racial strife and sometimes remarkable racial unity. In recent years. Black and White workers have stood shoulder to shoulder in major strikes by steelworkers, coal miners, teachers, and hospital employees. For this and other reasons, some writers conclude that race has become less important than class.[8] But they use "class" as a function of income rather than as a relationship to the means of production and a designation of who controls the value produced by labor. When race was the problem, the White racist was to blame. But with "class" as the

problem, the more conservative writers can blame poverty on the deficient economic performance of African Americans themselves, just as do the "culture of poverty" theorists.[9] Having discovered the class dimension (in a limited sense) of the Black proletariat's plight, we would be mistaken to conclude that racism is now less important. In recent years, various ugly racial incidents in major cities have demonstrated the persistent role racism plays in keeping people divided against each other. Despite the decades of education against racism, when class anxieties are provoked, then racism reemerges.

Class power gives attitudinal racism much of its virulence. A White calling a Black "nigger" is uttering a more offensive and threatening racial slur than a Black calling a White "honkey." Why? Because of the past and present reality of class-race power behind the words. "Honkey" has not the backdrop of threat, violence, terrorism, injustice, and exclusion that "nigger" has had for three centuries. If Blacks react to racial slurs more vehemently than Whites, it is because they have more reason to. They have been the oppressed minority.

On occasions when conservatives explicitly link class with race, it is to discourage critical considerations of both, as when a representative of the Daughters of the American Revolution denounced attempts "to array class against class and race against race."[10] Such a view represents a deliberate blurring of moral reality. Setting "race against race" is a social evil when it refers to lynch-mob terrorism, segregation, and the hate-mongering that White authorities and White individuals have practiced. But it is something else when it refers to the struggles waged by people of color against White violence, privilege, and exploitation. The latter instance does not involve arraying "race against race" but mobilizing people of goodwill against injustice. There is a difference between conflict that is initiated by racial oppressors and conflict that arises from resistance to racial oppressors. The hatred expressed by the racist has no basis in reality; Blacks are not oppressing Whites—though many Whites convince themselves that they are.

Frequent admonitions against "those who preach racial, religious or class hatred" create a similarly false equation. The anticommunist Czechoslovak

Parliament passed a law in December 1991, which made it a crime—punishable with sentences up to five years—to support groups promoting "national, racial, class, or religious hatred." The law explicitly refers to groups "such as fascism or communism."[11] Thus, it equates the racist filth spewed by fascists with the criticisms of capitalism made by communists. Under the Czech law, one could be sent to jail for denouncing the plundering speculations of rich investors. Class hatred should be deplored when it refers to the insults and injuries the haves deliver upon the have-nots, but not when it refers to the struggles of the underprivileged against those who live off their backs. The difference between the two "class hatreds" is the difference between justice and injustice. It is a just animosity that underpaid and overworked employees might feel toward those who squeeze as much profit from their labor as possible, who deny them the right to collective bargaining, who use repressive laws against unions, who oppose and ignore occupational safety codes, who refuse to negotiate contracts and violate the contracts that are negotiated, who raid employee pension funds, who force workers to take cuts in pay while awarding themselves lavish dividends and bonuses, and who live in utter opulence while their employees are deprived of minimum amenities. The hatred that the poor might feel toward their politico-economic oppressors has a basis in reality and is correctly directed. The hatred that the owning class feels toward organized workers is anchored in their fear of losing their privileged way of life.

IGNORING THE CLASS DIMENSION

One's race or gender may assume more visibility and urgency on the level of personal experience than one's class affiliation, especially in a society that denies the existence of class power and class injuries.[12] But whatever our sense of things at the personal level, when trying to understand the overall system we cannot discount the enormous significance of class power in both the economy and in political life. As noted in previous chapters, the capitalist class also holds sway over other social institutions and cultural values. They who control the first conditions of life, control much else. For the owning class, maintenance of the capital-accumulation process becomes the overriding consideration in the organization of society. The influence of the rich White males who run most of this country stems

from their *class power,* not from the fact that they are White males—although that certainly doesn't hurt their life chances in any way.

Remarkably enough, the denial of class power is so persistent in the dominant political mythology that poverty itself is often not considered a class phenomenon. Instead, as already mentioned, indigence is blamed on the cultural and attitudinal deficiencies of low-income people, a disproportionate number of whom are nonwhites or women.[13] Poverty is treated as a "problem" of race and gender, not a problem of the political economy and class forces that make people poor. In this context, a "growing sensitivity" toward race and gender becomes little more than a way of evading class realities and blaming the victims.

Consider other evasions. Statistics reveal a growing differential between White and Black mortality. Within each class, African Americans tend to have a higher death rate than Caucasians. By concentrating exclusively on racial and gender indicators, we fail to notice there is also a growing differential between classes. Blue-collar workers (regardless of race) are 2.3 times more likely to die of heart disease than managers and professionals. In contrast. Black males are only 1.2 times more likely than White males to do so. Low-income people of whatever race are more likely to report they are in poor health than upper-income people. In sum, the growing morbidity differentials in the United States need to be explained by looking at class as well as race and gender. But the U.S. government collects data only on race and gender while ignoring class.

As the public-health expert Vicente Navarro noted, "Many of the things that are assumed to be characteristic of Blacks are, in fact, characteristic of low income."[14]

By overlooking politico-economic injustices, both the racist and the academic investigator can blame the victims for their victimization, treating poverty as a symptom of racial deficiencies. Thus, we have the stereotype of the irresponsible ghetto father who refuses to pay child support. No doubt such men exist, but we might wonder why they get so much more attention than the massive numbers of White middle-class, college-educated fathers who refuse to pay child support (the higher the income, the lower

the compliance with court orders).[15] The problem of child support is not racial, as such, but class-gender based. Yet, it is usually treated by opponents of welfare as a problem peculiar to the inner-city African-American family.

The practice of using the effects of class oppression as fodder for racial bigotry is made easier because racial and class prejudices resemble and reinforce each other. As noted in chapter 8, for centuries the poor of whatever ethnicity have been seen as lazy, stupid, worthless, visceral, improvident, self-indulgent, morally depraved, criminally inclined, incapable of self-improvement, creatures of impulse and violence, and self-victimizing—an image that also fits the bigot's portrait of various ethnic groups. Overcoming the ethnic stereotype meant becoming a close approximation of the Anglo-Protestant bourgeois gentleman or lady, adopting cultural trappings that were emblematic of class achievement. There was no acceptable way to be both Black and poor without confirming the derogatory stereotype.[16] Even being Black and prosperous may not be enough. If the absence of middle-class attributes and achievements feeds the racist stereotype, the presence of such traits is no guarantee that an economically successful African American will escape racism's "poisonous sting." Yet, middle-class Blacks can usually escape some of the worst effects of class-race oppression that beset the very poorest African Americans.

The habit of treating class problems as racial ones is continually reinforced by established institutions. Thus, the courts ignore class and consider only race and gender as categories for equal treatment under the law. Stephanie Cleverdon notes:

> Race has been labeled a "suspect category" by the Supreme Court, and any difference in the treatment of one person from another on account of race is, according to the Court, constitutionally impermissible. ... Wealth, on the other hand, is not a "suspect category," and the Court holds that the state has no legal obligation to afford equal opportunity to the rich and poor. The Constitution, in the words of former Justice John M. Harlan, "doesn't impose on the states an affirmative duty to lift the handicaps flowing from differences in economic circumstances." ... Because the law prohibits discrimination on account of race, courts handle a flood of claims arising under it. But there is no law requiring access to good education or decent jobs. These are not legally protected "rights" within our system.[17]

The tendency to deal with race and gender while ignoring class is manifested in universities and colleges across the nation. Courses and books designed to deal with distortions and omissions in literature, social science, and history usually focus on race and gender without much mention of class forces.[18] Important and valuable battles have been waged on behalf of various multicultural programs and women's studies. But few, if any, schools offer comprehensive study programs in class struggle and class power, nor would such programs be treated as having a legitimate claim to academic standing. Rather, they would be dismissed as "Marxist," and therefore of no value.

The class dimension is sometimes overlooked by the victims of racism themselves. Some Black nationalist and "Afrocentrist" spokespersons do their share to confine African-American consciousness within purely racial parameters. Rather than looking at the politico-economic system that has victimized their people (and others), they blame an undifferentiated "White racism," judging all Whites guilty of the oppression suffered by African Americans. Having no class analysis, no understanding of the relationship between class power, wealth, and racial oppression, and opposed to building multicultural coalitions, they slip into a racialist and even anti-Semitic mode. Some construct pseudo-scholarship to buttress obscurantist theories claiming that all of civilization and early creativity is African in origin; that White people are especially vicious because unlike other humans they are descendants of the brutish Neanderthals (with the Jews being the "'purest' and oldest Neanderthal-Caucasoids"); that the role of Black people in the Bible was deleted by Whites around the year 1900; that Whites oppress and colonize Blacks out of fear of genetic annihilation since White pigmentation is recessive; that Blacks will find liberation and betterment only by returning to their African cultural roots, and so forth.[19]

Other African-American spokespersons do see the link between racism and class interest. In 1953, the noted African-American scholar W. E. B. Du Bois wrote:

> I still think today as yesterday that the color line is a great problem of this century. But today I see more clearly than yesterday that back of the problem of race and color, lies a greater problem which both obscures and implements it: and that is the fact that so many civilized

> persons are willing to live in comfort even if the price of this is poverty, ignorance and disease of the majority of their fellowmen ...[20]

During the protest movement of the 1960s, when African-American leaders broadened their racial protest to include a class analysis, they did so at their own peril. They became a threat to the ruling class and were no longer tolerated. Thus scores of members of the avowedly anticapitalist, revolutionary Black Panther revolutionary party were murdered by police and FBI in raids on Panther headquarters in cities across the nation. In January 1965, after evolving from a Black separatist into an internationalist and anti-imperialist leader, Malcolm X stated: "It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture." He further opined, "You can't have capitalism without racism." And when you find people who "don't have this racism in their outlook, usually they're socialists or their political philosophy is socialism."[21] A month later Malcolm X was assassinated by persons whose affiliations the police never bothered to investigate. He had long been under surveillance by the CIA and FBI.[22] Another African-American leader, Martin Luther King, Jr., after years of struggling for the civil rights of his people, also began to voice criticism of the nation's political economy and foreign policy. King asserted that "the evils of capitalism are as real as the evils of militarism and the evils of racism." He too was then murdered, supposedly by a lone assassin who just took it upon himself to commit the deed.[23]

Along with great leaders like King and Malcolm, many ordinary African Americans have a sense of class power, as psychologist Robert Coles discovered in his investigations of families in the United States. His African-American respondents would ask him if he also had interviewed "the rich folks." Didn't they mean "White" instead of "rich"? he asked. No, they meant "the rich ... the ones who decide how the poor folks live." An African-American lawyer told Coles that if he wanted to know why Black people lived the way they do, he should talk not to the ordinary working-class White people who were also victimized but to the affluent and powerful ones, who owned the farmlands and factories: "They own everything, and they decide what happens in this city, and in all the other

cities." Coles found surprisingly similar opinions among working-class Whites. They too railed against "the rich" or the "big shots with plenty of money and all the power they want."[24] Coles's subjects were introducing him to the concept of class power.

RACISM AS RACISM: A MOMENTUM OF ITS OWN

Along with being an expression of class society, racism develops a momentum of its own. Be they frothy ranters or more gentile sophisticates, bigots develop their own inbred mentality, with its contradictory and repetitive images, half-baked arguments, and selective immunity to evidence. They condemn minorities both for intruding into places where they are not wanted and for sticking clannishly to themselves and not mixing with the general population; for not Americanizing and for presuming a too-ready acceptance into American life; for lacking all religious virtue or for having the wrong brand of religion; for being slothful and lacking a work ethic or for working too hard and monopolizing opportunities for advancement. Minorities are accused of lacking proper ethics, being licentious and morally depraved, and for being unworthy of full membership in society.

Racism as racism is unfortunately alive and well at the attitudinal and institutional levels. We can recall Earl Butz, secretary of agriculture in the Nixon administration, who caused a furor after a newsperson overheard and reported his racist comments. There was Marianne Mele Hall, appointed by President Reagan to head the Copyright Royalty Tribunal, who claimed that most African-American males "insist on preserving their jungle freedoms, their women, their avoidance of personal responsibility, and their abhorrence of the work ethic."[25] A tenured philosophy professor at the City College of New York teaches his students that "it has been amply confirmed over the last several decades that on average, Blacks are significantly less intelligent than Whites."[26] Senators, Supreme Court justices, and presidents have signed racist real-estate covenants or joined country clubs that ban people of color. Every year there are hundreds of acts of violence or vandalism perpetrated by hate groups. Those who say racism is a thing of the past must be living in some distant future.

Some Caucasians complain that African Americans have been accorded special treatment through quotas and affirmative action. In truth, far from winning special favors, people of color have had to confront discrimination in industry, business, labor unions, courts, entertainment, sports, the arts, medicine, and other professions. African Americans still encounter racism in housing and schooling, when dealing with police and the law, when starting businesses, getting loans, buying real estate, and in job recruitment, training, evaluation, and promotion.[27] Studies show that even after controlling for income level and severity of illness, African Americans are less likely than Caucasians to receive medical services, coronary surgery, and intensive care in hospitals.[28] Government programs in a variety of policy areas have operated with discriminatory effect against people of color.[29] For years the FBI routinely investigated, without probable cause, elected and appointed African-American officials, deeming them intellectually unfit to govern or politically troublesome.[30]

White commentators repeatedly have admonished African Americans to work their way up the ladder, as did European immigrants of an earlier era.[31] Harvard sociologists Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan could assert that the African American, being "only an American and nothing else ... has no values and culture to guard and protect," and is not likely to launch massive self-help efforts, as have other groups that have "moved up" in American life.[32] Knowing next to nothing about the realities of African-American culture, some academicians assume it does not exist. Thus their perceptions are often racist in effect, despite their conscious claims to the contrary.

The Germans, Swedes, Irish, Welsh, Poles, Jews, Italians, and others, who migrated to the United States from the 1820s to the 1920s, did not move up so much as they moved in at certain modest levels of the social structure. They took over the small farms and businesses in some regions. One or another European ethnic group moved into the mines and mills, dominated the building and garment trades, the sanitation, fire, and police departments, school teaching, and other public services. And they were still there when African Americans began to demand entry.

Sometimes the destitute European arrivals replaced the African Americans —who actually were more economically advanced than the immigrants. In cities like New York and Boston, before the Civil War, freed Blacks held many of the skilled and unskilled jobs coveted by the Irish and others.[33] But in time, racism did its work and they lost out to the newcomers. The Irish and other immigrants, themselves, faced no small amount of bigotry. Differences between them and native-born Caucasian workers were used to further divide the working class. But they did have the one big advantage of being White in a White racist society.

Today, newly arrived Koreans, Pakistanis, Cubans, Eastern Europeans, and Vietnamese, often fairly well educated and financially solvent and facing relatively less discrimination, have moved in ahead of the African-American proletariat. Rather than emulating the immigrant experience, as they are so often admonished to do, African Americans have been repeatedly victimized by it, being pushed to the back of the line as each newly arrived group jumps in ahead of them.

Despite all this, African Americans have made advances, especially in entertainment, sports, and to a lesser extent, the professions. From 1977 to 1982 the number of Black-owned businesses almost doubled, grossing $12.4 billlon in 1982. In 1964 there were 280 African-American elected public officials. By the late 1980s there were more than five thousand. But while the Black middle-class has grown, African-American proletariat life has worsened. What is needed even more than selective advancement into the middle class is the collective betterment of life and work conditions for the impoverished mass. Such a course brings us back to class struggle.

One group of African Americans is shown favoritism and special treatment by the media and other conservative institutions: they are the Black conservatives. One study compared the media exposure, from 1984 to 1992, accorded conservative and progressive African-American scholars, persons with Ph.D.s holding university-affiliated postions in the arts and social sciences. Conservatives received anywhere from six to twenty times more newspaper and magazine citations. In addition, the top three Black conservative academicians had been the subject of twenty-six feature stories, while the three top progressives could claim only one such story.[34]

All this despite the fact that progressive Black scholars greatly outnumber conservatives ones. But it is the conservative ones who say and do the things that are looked upon with favor by the conservative corporate media. The same is true in other areas. For a Black progressive to get on the Supreme Court, he must be as brilliant as Thurgood Marshall. For a Black conservative to get on the Court, he can be as mediocre as Clarence Thomas.

Among Whites, generally speaking, those who are more conservative also tend to be more racist.[35] By definition, a conservative is someone who wants to preserve the inequalities of life. Conservatives are distrustful of government policies that might interfere with the advantages of wealth and economic power. They are opposed to demands for an equalization of life chances and a more equitable distribution of the surplus value of society. Hence, they tend to be against the claims made by the have-nots. And many of racism's victims certainly qualify as have-nots, done-ins, down-and-outs, and ripped-offs.

Yet, as noted in the previous chapter, in the face of all history there also has appeared those who have fought against ethnic hatred, fear, and oppression; those who are determined that no human being be treated as inferior to any other, or be diminished or dehumanized in any way. Only such a dedication gives us the full measure of our own humanity.

CHAPTER 11: The Victimization of Women

"What does woman want?" is Sigmund Freud's famous question. After decades of listening to the tormented histories of his female patients, the patriarch still was not sure. What women want is what most of us want: the opportunity to live decent, fulfilling, loving, and secure lives. And before all that, women want something else: they want to stop being victimized by men.

THE PRACTICE AND IDEOLOGY OF MALE DOMINATION

In most societies, women have been relegated to subordinate positions. Endowed with denser musculature and usually stronger body frames, men have not been above using their physical strength to enforce their superordination. In addition, a protracted pregnancy period, repeated and sometimes debilitating childbirths, and offspring with a long lactation and dependency period have left women reliant on males and vulnerable to male exploitation. The child's dependence on the mother increases the mother's dependence on others.[1]

Such biological differences make male supremacy possible but not inevitable. They are a necessary condition for abuse, not a sufficient cause. Not every male mistreats women. There are adults who do not abuse children, even though adults are physically stronger and socially more experienced. Other conditions must obtain. According to one theory, patriarchy arose with the advent of property. In early hunting societies, there was a relatively nonpossessive enjoyment of children, a nonexploitative relationship between mates, and no private property other than utensiles and personal effects. With the emergence of more developed horticulture and the advent of landed property, private profit was now possible. Family lineage was tied to land and wealth. The labor of women and children became a source of accumulation. Women themselves became possessions, their sexuality controlled in the service of profit. With class society came the wholesale subjugation of women.

With the advent of property, most men too became subordinate to the few who accumulated vast holdings.[2]

Patriarchal dominance exists because it provides gratifying privileges. The traditional patriarch has women who do all the drudgery work and child-rearing, who tend to his personal needs, submit to his sexual desires, do net question his right to extramarital indulgences, are economically dependent upon him, and have no defense against his tyrannical commands and more corrupt impulses. Nowadays, when there is much talk about how, because of their own sexism, men cheat themselves of mutually gratifying relationships with women, it is important to remind ourselves that female subjugation has worked to the advantage of males. The husbands, fathers, and employers who have reaped its benefits have not noticeably complained of feeling deprived of the deeper gratifications that come with gender equality, no more than have the pimps who live lavishly off the labor of their prostitutes.

Male dominance extends beyond the family into other social institutions. Like racists and class oppressors, male supremacists develop an array of myths justifying their privileged status as the natural order of things. Folklore, religion, philosophy, science, and literature have been enlisted to keep women in their place. Aristote tells us: "So is it naturally with the male and the female; the one is superior, the other inferior; the one governs, the other is governed."[3] Holy Scripture revealed that God is not only a male but a male supremacist: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16). "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man. ... The man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (I Corinthians 11:3,9). "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" (Colossians 3:18). "Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands. ... While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (I Peter 3:1-2). "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" (I Timothy 2:11-12).

Female rebellion is not new. In 1776, in a letter to her famous husband, Abigail Adams urged that the laws of the new nation should "remember the

Ladies and ... not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. ... Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity ..." In a manner reminiscent of many privileged individuals, John Adams responded by reversing the roles of victim and victimizer: "As to your extraordinary Code of Laws, I cannot but laugh. ... We [men] have only the Name of Masters, and [will not] give up this, which would compleatly subject Us to the Despotism of the Peticoat."[4] In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, political leaders, educators, and clergy thought females, as creatures of emotion, were innately unqualified to vote. Speaking for many males of his day, a minister referred to the "logical infirmity of mind which constitutes one of the weaknesses, and I might also say, one of the charms of the feminine constitution."[5] It was said that women voters would have their heads turned by handsome candidates; they would forfeit their right to chivalric protections; they could best inspire their men toward the virtuous life by remaining above politics; suffrage would cause them to forgo marriage and motherhood and succumb to the temptations of free love and socialism. Furthermore, the turbulence of political life would be too taxing on a woman's delicate nature and health.[6]

In considering the frailty of females, the anti-suffragists had to overlook the working-class women who stood from dawn to dusk toiling at a factory loom, or who put in endless days of stoop labor picking crops in a hot field, or seventy-hour weeks sewing garments in firetrap sweatshops. And as subsequent events demonstrated, even the most delicate middle-class ladies proved hardy enough to withstand the rigors of walking into a polling booth and casting a ballot.

ECONOMIC REALITIES

It is not men in toto who are the oppressors of women, but "men in particular roles."[7] The mode of gender oppression often varies according to class and race, resulting in dramatic differences in the destinies of women. Bourgeois feminist consciousness is both class bound and indifferent—or overtly hostile—to the recognition of class differences and class conflict. The same Abigail Adams, who forthrightly argued woman's cause, expressed undiluted hostility toward the farmers of western Massachusetts

who, facing ruinous taxes, foreclosures, and the prospect of debtors prison, took up arms in 1787. In a letter to Thomas Jefferson, she denounced Shay's Rebellion: "Ignorant, restless desperados, without conscience or principles, have led a deluded multitude to follow their standard, under pretense of grievances which have no existence but in their imaginations. Some of them were crying out for a paper currency, some for an equal distribution of property." Abigail Adams called for the "most vigorous measures to quell and suppress" economically oppressed women and men, these "mobbish insurgents" who dared to rebel against her class.[8]

Similarly, the French novelist George Sand, who defied nineteenth-century conventions by wearing men's clothes and demanding equality for women, denounced the revolutionary women and men of the Paris Commune who fought against the class privileges she herself enjoyed: "The mob ... is composed in part of dupes and fools, in part of the most degraded and criminal elements of the population. ... nothing but a lot of coarse clowns."[9] When push came to shove, the otherwise iconoclastic Sand showed her bourgeois colors and class bigotry, demonstrating once again that wearing pants is no guarantee of wisdom or fairness.

In 1908, the labor militant Clara Zetkin sharply criticized "a great and very influential portion of the English Women's Righters" who opposed the "legal protection of female labor."[10] Anne Sullivan, teacher of Helen Keller, repeatedly tangled with Boston Brahmin women, who advocated female suffrage and abolitionism, yet treated their Irish servant girls like dirt.[11]

Through the nineteenth century in most states of the Union, women could not hold office or vote. They could not sit on juries. They were barred from medical schools, law schools, and postgraduate training either by law or custom. They did not have legal custody of their own children, or legal ownership of their own earnings, or of any property or inheritance acquired before or during marriage; these became the husband's property.[12]

Whatever else may be said of their lives, today affluent and professionally employed females are saved from many of the worst abuses inflicted upon working-class women (and men). Low-income females are far more heavily burdened by toil, drudgery, want, and illness. They enjoy far fewer

opportunities for advanced education, leisure, travel, creative work, career advancement, and financial independence, and have less access to good maternal and medical services and child-care. As one class-conscious feminist puts it, "Working-class life is demeaning, not because its culture or values are inferior, but because of the lack of money, lack of opportunity, lack of job responsibility, lack of respect, lack of power—i.e., because of oppressive treatment of the working class by the higher classes."[13]

For many low-income Caucasian, African-American, and Latino women, work does not offer the self-development of a professional career.[14] One in four women workers of color are employed as domestics. Among their stingiest employers are the professional women who hire them in order to free themselves for career pursuits. One study showed that professional women regularly denied their domestic help the benefits they took for granted for themselves, such as paid holidays, paid sick leave, and regular raises. Only about half of them contributed to Social Security for their employees.[15] The study said nothing about affluent male professionals, who doubtless are no better employers than their female counterparts.

Mostly because of hard times, from 1970 to 1990 the number of women who have more than one job has increased almost 400 percent, from 636,000 to 3.1 million.[16] The mistreatment of women knows no class boundaries but is more pernicious among economically deprived groups, as oppressive class conditions and gender mistreatment reinforce each other—even within the labor movement itself.[17] The double oppression of class and gender becomes a triple oppression when we include the racism that low-income women of color encounter. One statistic might suffice: premature death among Black females is nearly five times higher than for White females.[18]

The superexploitation faced by working women is a long-standing one, highlighted in a government report released in 1911:

> The low wages at which women will work form the chief reason for employing them at all. ...A woman's cheapness is, so to speak, her greatest economic asset. She can be used to keep down the cost of production where she is regularly employed. ... She can be introduced as a strike breaker to take the place of men seeking higher wages, or the threat of introducing her may be used to avert such a strike. But the moment she organizes a union and seeks by

> organization to secure better wages she diminishes or destroys what is to the employer her chief value.[19]

Nowadays, women are less likely to be used as strikebreakers but their job marketability still rests on their relatively low wage demands. In 1992, women earned seventy-five cents for every dollar earned by men, up from sixty cents in previous years. This jump did not reflect any gain in women's wages, but losses in men's earnings because of the 1990-92 recession and the downgrading of higher paid male occupations.

The conditions of women varies greatly from country to country. In North America and Europe, almost all females attend secondary school. In Pakistan, only 17 percent are enrolled in school.[20] In Iran, women are denied an advanced education. Important government posts are closed to them. An Iranian male can divorce his wife at any time without informing her but she has no such option. "If women were given the right to divorce their husbands," according to the head of the Islamic Republic's Supreme Court, "being emotional by nature, they could make irrational decisions. This does not apply to men."[21] Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani concurred: "Men are stronger and more capable in all fields.

Men's brains are larger."[22] Here is yet another head of state who cannot tell the difference between his brain and his ego.

Though woman's lot may differ from country to country, common patterns persist. In all countries, females are disproportionately concentrated in the lowest paying employments and greatly underrepresented in the more desirable positions. Across the globe, women grow approximately half the world's food, but own almost none of the land. In every country, be it Bangladesh or the United States, women take primary responsibility for child-rearing and other life-maintenance chores; unpaid labor that is essential for social production and biological reproduction. In every country, women with dependent children who lack spousal support are among the very poorest.[23]

To conclude, however, that men as a "class" exploit women as a "class" is to ignore class reality. Throughout the world, most men also suffer from the

economic oppressions of capitalism and imperialism. Since they compose two-thirds of the work force, they make up most of the impoverished workers. And relatively few of the men who grow the other half of the world's food own any land. To some degree, men's desperate economic situation increases their abuse of women. True, abuse knows no class boundaries, but it occurs with greater frequency among unemployed or poor males taking out their frustrations by getting drunk and neglecting or abusing their female partners and children.[24] Class oppression fosters sexual oppression. Here again, low-income women have it the worst.

It should be evident by now that economic factors underlie much (but not all) of women's oppression. Yet some writers claim that poverty is essentially gender-based, noting that White women in the United States earn less than Black men.[25] Are we to conclude from this that White women are more economically oppressed than Black men? The data on income takes into account only persons with jobs and does not factor in unemployment, which is far worse for African-American males than for White or even Black females—being as high as 60 and 70 percent in inner-city neighborhoods. By every other indicator, be it high-school dropout rates, college attendance, homelessness, suicide, drug addiction, incarceration rates, and death rates, African-American males do not fare as well as White females.[26]

Poverty is a class condition not fundamentally determined by gender or race—although both gender and race are major contributing factors. The economic vulnerability of women is brought home, literally, by the no-fault divorce laws. Intended to treat the sexes as equal before the law, no-fault divorce has had a disastrous effect on women and children. The new laws assume that women, including ones who have spent most of their lives as housewives and mothers, are independent and employable rather than dependent. The result is that only one in six divorced women are awarded any alimony, and only 13 percent of women with preschool children are granted child support. A year after divorce, men experience a 43 percent increase in their standard of living, while women suffer a 73 percent decline in theirs. Estimates of noncompliance on child support range from 60 to 80 percent.[27] As a result, more than half the families headed by single mothers are low-income and most of the poor are children. With one of every five

children in this country living in severely deprived conditions, there is an "infantilization" of poverty.[28] Much of this stems from a policy that pursues an abstract "gender equality," without making adequate allowance for economic realities, specifically the limited job marketability of females who have been long-term "homemakers." To highlight the economic factors that are interlaced with women's oppression is not to dismiss such oppression but to explain something about its virulence.

SEXISM, CAPITALISM, AND SOCIALISM

We frequently list the underdogs of our society as "workers, women, and people of color," as if these were three distinct groups and as if all workers were White males. But people of color and women (of all colors) are highly concentrated in the laboring class; they too are workers. This is not to deny that race and gender present their own particular imperatives; it is to note that class is a broader and more inclusive designation than normally thought. The various modes of gender, racial, and class oppression are woven into a social system of power that is itself based on class.[29]

When we think of class as a relationship to the means of production, a relationship to social power in capitalist society, we are talking about a process that includes everyone on one or another side of that systemic relationship. Class divisions differ from other social cleavages. As Victor Wallis points out, "Classes are by definition unequal. One can talk about equality between women and men, and ... between different ethnic groups, but one cannot talk about equality between the capitalist class and the working class. The capitalist class would not exist if it did not dominate the working class."[30] As workers, women and people of color can never achieve equality with their employers, no more than can White male workers.

How then can women win equality under capitalism if no one else can? For one thing, they can fight to end the Superexploitation they endure, improving their life chances within the confines of the working and middle classes—just as those classes in toto may do within the existing economic system. And women and people of color do fight against a host of other discriminatory policies and practices that are not directly related to class.

Some feminist theorists maintain that the oppression of women is older than capitalism and involves the first essential relationship of life itself, that which exists between the sexes. Furthermore, it is more widespread than capitalism, being found in every sort of society. From this they conclude that patriarchy is the primary contradiction of society; a more fundamental causality than capitalism. Domination over women provides the "patriarchal substructure" of later class dominations, including even slavery and imperialism.[31] In fact, a lot of things besides patriarchy preceded and are more widespread than capitalism: crime, war, authoritarian states, racial oppression, and the exploitation of human labor itself. But that does not make capitalism, or whatever the prevailing system of class power, subsidiary to any of them. That male domination of women preceded capitalism does not make it the more encompassing force, no more than does the prehistoric, omnipresent adult domination of children elevate that relationship to the key dynamic in explaining the development of history.

The important question is not which came first, patriarchy or class oppression, but how is capitalism sustained by sexism and how does it in turn buttress sexism, helping to create new forms of gender exploitation or lending new life to old forms. Here are some suggested links.

First, capitalism rewards the impulses of exploitation, accumulation, competitiveness, ruthless self-interest, individualized aggrandizement, scarcity psychology, and indifference to the sufferings of the disadvantaged. Such impulses make it conducive to gender and racial oppression and make sexism and racism functional for capitalism.

Second, capitalism relies on sexism as a diversionary force. Conservative leaders seize upon irrelevant foes to channelize popular discontent away from socioeconomic conditions and toward "cultural" controversies. They use "non-class" issues like abortion, affirmative action, the traditional family, pornography, homosexuality, and sexual morality to preempt any critical examination of who gets what, when, and how. Feminists are targeted by conservatives as one of the groups that represent what is wrong with America.

Third, wealth is accumulated by expropriating the labor power of the worker. Sexism and racism make that expropriation much easier. The

conservative's fear of class equality extends to racial and gender equality. Women and people of color do some of the dirtiest, toughest, lowest-paying work in our society. Greater equality for them means better pay for them, which only cuts into profits. Conservatives are the first to appreciate this. There are powerful economic incentives for keeping women subordinate and resisting the equalization of life chances by any disfranchised group. It is no accident that the most persistent attacks against feminism have come from fervent conservative defenders of capitalism, in right-wing magazines and in books with titles like *The Failure of Feminism* and *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*.[32] Conservatives have been at the forefront of the fight against the Equal Rights Amendment, legal abortion, affirmative action, lesbian and gay rights, family leave, and support for women with dependent children.[33]

In traditional patriarchal society, women are treated as the property of men. Under capitalism they are treated as class commodities, which is a variation of the same thing. To be sure, the commodification of women is not unique to capitalist culture. By "commodification" I mean the process of objectifying and transforming the female appearance and body to fit marketable (that is, marriageable) standards. Through the ages, women have stretched their necks and lips; painted, tatooed, and design-scarred their bodies; crushed their vital organs into corsets; flattened their breasts with chest bands; protruded their breasts with padded brassieres; flattened their buttocks with girdles; protruded their buttocks with bustles; pierced their ears and noses; painted their nails and lips; widened their upper torsos with enormously padded shoulders; and dyed, bleached, teased, cut, sprayed, and combed their hair in every imaginable way. For this it is said: "Woman, thy name is Vanity"—as if women acted solely on their own initiative, without the pressures of social conformity and the connivances of an entire fashion industry. Women adorn themselves primarily not out of vanity but to gain the attention and approval of men, to persuade men to "buy" them either as wives or workers.

What passes for feminine beauty tends to reflect the dominant-class standards of society. In parts of Africa, prospective brides of more prosperous families are kept in idleness and isolation for six months or more in order to be fattened up to enormous size, becoming representations

of abundance. In feudal China, mutilation by foot binding transformed upper-class women into class commodities who would have neither the capacity nor the need to walk because they were served by others, a "luxury" not available to the peasant women who worked in the fields. In the West, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women of affluent background avoided the sun with broad-rimmed hats, long gloves, and parasols. Skin untouched by sun was the mark of a lady of leisure who never toiled exposed to the elements. In later decades, when affluent, leisure life took on a more outdoors aspect with sailing, swimming, and elaborate vacations, a suntan—especially off-season—became emblematic of both beauty and the good life.

In contemporary U.S. society, the prototype of feminine beauty—blond, tallish, slim, well-tailored, and polished—is a close approximation of the upper-class, Anglo-Protestant ideal. Females who fit that description are even referred to as "classy," and are paraded in the media as paragons of feminine desirability.[34] Meanwhile, millions of ordinary U.S. women seek to fit the idealized mold by subjecting themselves to the mutilations of cosmetic surgery, reshaping their breasts, lifting their faces, and flattening the natural contours of their buttocks and thighs. Or they resort to diets, weight-reduction drugs, and fitness centers where they attempt to develop the upper body and narrow the lower, so that the New Woman better resembles the Old Man. For millions of American women, the worst of all fates is to be endowed with a large posterior—an attribute numerous men find appealing, but it is out of line with the increasingly slim-hip image paraded in present-day capitalist culture and pursued desperately by multitudes of women.

The average 5-foot-8-inch Miss America contestant weighed 132 pounds in 1954 and 117 pounds in 1980. The average model—the epitome of svelte, upper-class fashion—is 5 feet 10 inches and weighs 111 pounds. One study found that 80 percent of fourth-grade girls in California (mostly nine-year-olds) had already been on their first diet. Another survey found that 75 percent of young women thought themselves too fat, though 45 percent were actually underweight. Over half of U.S. and Canadian women are on a diet at any given time. Some 25 percent of North American females suffer from either anorexia nervosa (uncontrollable self-starvation) or bulimia

(induced vomiting or laxatives after eating). Hundreds of thousands of people have died of anorexia—almost all of them women.[35] The self-starvation of women demonstrates how people collaborate in their own oppression by internalizing the victimizing idolatry.

Capitalism commodifies women in more obvious ways as marketable objects of sexual desire. A highly profitable, multibillion-dollar entertainment industry has been built on the propagation of glamorous, sexy images of women—the art of respectable pornography. In television and magazine advertisements, female images are used to attract the viewer's eye to a particular product. Women quite literally become commodities for the marketing of other commodities.

Is the condition of women any better under socialism? Having understood the functional relationship between female subjugation and class domination, many socialists anticipated that, with the passing of class society, sexism would become a thing of the past. Women would take their place as equals to men in the revolutionary struggle and in the subsequent development of the new productive system. The transformation of class relations would transform gender relations. As men stopped oppressing men, they would also stop oppressing women.

In actuality, woman's place at work and at home did not change as dramatically as expected in existing communist societies. Women entered the work force in great numbers but still carried the main burdens of household labor and child-rearing, so that many complained of having to work a "double day." Men still tended to dominate associations and institutions, especially the higher leadership positions, and to dominate women in both the workplace and the home.

Still, the transformations that took place in communist and other revolutionary societies did benefit women significantly, representing a dramatic change in status from the reactionary societies of prerevolutionary times. In countries like Poland, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, China, and Cuba, female educational levels rose dramatically. Women could enter professions from which they had been previously barred. They dramatically increased their numbers in party and parliamentary affairs, to a far greater extent than in Western legislatures. Women enjoyed improved health care,

especially prenatal and postnatal care, child-care assistance, legal abortions, and extended periods of paid maternity leave—benefits that came to most of them for the first time in history. The Marxist government of South Yemen abolished child marriages. It also introduced egalitarian divorce laws, as did other socialist countries. In communist countries, 90 percent of all females worked. Prostitution was greatly reduced. The combination of financial independence and egalitarian marital laws brought a dramatic rise in divorces, often initiated by women who no longer had to depend on unhappy marriages for their survival. In Cuba and several other Marxist countries, "family laws" put men under equal obligation for housework and child-rearing tasks.[36] Women also gained the same life improvements under socialism as did men: guaranteed employment, adequate housing, health care, free university education, and professional training.

With the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, women experienced the realities of capitalism. They were now the first fired and the last hired. New positions and training opportunities went to men first. In Russia, women made up 70 percent of the unemployed, most of whom had specialized or higher educations. They were now being channelized into low-pay, unskilled jobs, when these became available, and were advised against getting professional training. Female representatives in the Soviets have dropped from over 30 percent to 5 percent.[37] The loss of free child-care services, paid maternity leave, and paid leave to tend to sick children created still greater obstacles to female employment.

In Poland and the former German Democratic Republic, legal abortion came under attack. East German women were astonished by the backward attitudes in the west, complaining that women were seen as incapable and dumb and not taken seriously. With growing unemployment, violence against women escalated dramatically and shelters for battered females were overflowing.[38] One East German woman commented that the West German women's movement was only beginning to fight for "what we already had here. ... We took it for granted because of the socialist system. Now we realize what we [lost]."[39]

The cumulative effects of capitalist "reforms" have been catastrophic for much of the population and for women in particular, bringing a marked

increase in poverty, homelessness, crime, cutthroat competitiveness, profiteering, inflation, unemployment, suicide, and mental illness.[40] Polish president Lech Walesa had harsh words for compatriots who moaned about the "reforms": "You wanted to have America? ... You wanted the market to function as in America so we've done that. And it's hard, so far."[41] One last note: in most of the ex-communist countries, beauty contests and pornography were introduced and prostitution increased dramatically. The free market was giving women more opportunity to commodify their bodies.

MALE TERRORISM

There is a mode of victimization for which "sexism" seems too mild a term, specifically the stark brutality and physical violence perpetrated on a regular basis against millions of women throughout the world, better described as "male terrorism." Having noted the economic dimensions of sexism, we also should remember that male terrorism is present on a massive scale in just about every society, including our own, linked to seemingly ubiquitous realities about gender relations.

In many countries, the victimization is even more horrendous than in our own. In 1991, at a coed boarding school in Kenya, seventy-one girls were raped by their classmates and nineteen others died in the ensuing panic. The sexual assault of coeds was called a "common occurrence," and the deputy principle reassured the press: "The boys never meant any harm against the girls. They just wanted to rape."42 Throughout much of the world, rape is considered a male prerogative or a crime not against the woman but against the honor of her family or husband. Frequently the rapist is himself a family member. In the maternity hospital of Lima, Peru, 90 percent of the young mothers aged twelve to sixteen have been raped by their father, stepfather, or close relative.[43] In parts of Asia and the Middle East, the shame of rape is so great that the rape victim is sometimes killed by family members to reclaim the family honor. Or she may be cast out as damaged property, too tainted for marriage. Or, as in Pakistan, she might be thrown in jail for having been guilty of fornication outside marriage. One study in India found that 80 percent of prostitutes came to their profession after being ejected from their communities because they had been raped.[44]

In Latin American and Islamic countries, men go unpunished for defending their "honor" by killing their allegedly unfaithful wives or girlfriends.[45] In fundamentalist Islamic Iran, the law explicitly allows for the execution of adulterous women by stoning, burning, or being thrown off a cliff. Men may kill their wives, sisters, and daughters for "immorality."[46] In Niger, self-proclaimed holy men incited mobs to attack women in bars and bordellos. The men said the women's "indecent" dress and conduct were responsible for the drought.[47]

An estimated 100 million females in Africa and the Middle East are genitally mutilated during childhood or before marriage by infibulation and clitoridectomy—sometimes perishing in the process.[48] Such mutilation practically destroys a woman's capacity for sexual pleasure and supposedly frees her from wanton desires. In some countries, women are bartered into marriages not of their choice or murdered so that husbands can remarry for a better dowry.[49] Many of these practices are tolerated and even sanctioned by the governments under which they occur.

There is an economic dimension to some aspects of male terrorism. In numerous countries, thousands of women are kidnapped or sold into sexual slavery by their impoverished families; a transfer from the class that cannot afford to feed itself to the class that can use its surplus funds to procure whatever sexual services it desires.[50] An estimated 100 million females are missing from China, India, Pakistan and other Asian countries. They are aborted or killed at birth or done in by neglect and underfeeding.[51] As long as girls are seen as an economic drain, to be married off at great cost to the family, and boys as economic assets, who can earn income and care for parents in their old age, female infanticide will continue among rural (and even urban) poor.

For all the advances made by U.S. females, they still endure dreadful victimization. An estimated 12.1 million U.S. women have been raped, or one in eight (some estimates are one in four)—often by men they know, including members of their families. A random sample of women in Los Angeles County found one in five reporting that their first experience with coitus was a rape. Every hour, sixteen women in the United States face a rape or attempted rape. Only 16 percent of these rapes, or one in six, are

reported. Less than 40 percent of *reported* rapes result in arrest, and only 3 percent of these in conviction. A man has a greater risk of being jailed for petty larceny than for rape. Over 29 percent of rapes involve females *eleven years old or younger*. Another 32.3 percent of victims are between eleven and seventeen years old. Of the 683,000 rape victims each year, some 27,000 suffer serious physical injury. There are usually serious psychological effects. Rape victims are much more likely than nonvictims to attempt suicide, develop alcohol problems, and experience major depression or other post-traumatic stress.[52]

Male terrorism takes other forms. One in four U.S. women report being sexually molested as a child, usually repeatedly over prolonged periods of time by a male family member.[53] Tens of thousands of U.S. women either turn to prostitution because of economic need or are forced into it by a male exploiter—and kept there by acts of violence and intimidation.[54] Every day in the United States, four women are murdered by men with whom they have been intimate. Murder is the second leading cause of death among young women. In 1966, there were 644 serial murders in the U.S. In 1982, 4,118. Almost all serial killers are Caucasian males; nine out of ten of their victims are females.[55]

Three out of four U.S. women are victims of a violent crime during their lifetime. A woman is more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped, or killed by a male partner than by any other assailant. Statistically, a woman's home is her most dangerous place—if she has a man in it. An estimated three million women in this country are battered each year by their husbands or male partners, often repeatedly. Battered women usually lack the financial means to escape, especially if they have children. When they try, their male assailants are likely to come after them and inflict still worse retribution. Police usually are of little help. Arrest is the least frequently used response to domestic violence. In most states, domestic beatings are classified as "simple assault," a misdemeanor. Women who kill their male abusers in desperate acts of self-defense usually end up with murder convictions. In recent times, women's organizations have fought with some success to provide protected escapes for battered women and to make law enforcement agencies take more active measures against batterers and rapists.[56]

A widespread form of male terrorism is sexual harassment. In workplaces and on the street, men subject women to a continual barrage of uninvited overtures, intimidations, physical molestations, taunting, and obscenities. The female worker who does not respond to the sexual overtures of a male superior risks being passed over for promotion or being fired.[57] For women, fear becomes a kind of second nature, a constant awareness of postures, comments, and actions. Women take precautions in scores of ways that men rarely worry about in regard to their own safety.

Women have been fighting back, demanding that both government and society offer protections from gender abuse. Both pubhc officials and individual men must strive to end male terrorism. In fact, for generations there have been men who have spoken out for women's rights, but not enough of them.[58] Not every male is a rapist or woman beater, but every male who fails to appreciate the seriousness and magnitude of these crimes, and is silent about them, is complicit with the criminals.

CHAPTER 12: Conspiracy and Intent

The existing politico-economic system can be approached three basic ways: first, a *conservative celebration* of the wonders of our free-market society, coupled with an insistence that capitalism would be still more wonderful were it not for meddlesome government regulations and the demands of undeserving, low-income people who feed out of the public trough; second, a *liberal complaint* about some of our warped priorities and the aberrant problems that remain in an otherwise basically good system; third, a *radical analysis* that sees ecological crisis, military interventions, the national security state, homelessness, poverty, an inequitable tax system, and undemocratic social institutions such as the corporate-owned media not as irrational outcomes of a basically rational system but as rational results of a system whose central goal is the accumulation of wealth and power for the few.

If you take the third perspective, you cross an invisible line and will be labeled in mainstream circles a "conspiracy theorist," a "Marxist," and even a "paranoid"—terms treated by some people as coterminous.[1]

CONSPIRACY AND CLASS RULE

In 1837, Abraham Lincoln remarked, "These capitalists generally act harmoniously, and in concert, to fleece the people ..."[2] Today, he would be dismissed as a "conspiracy theorist." When so labeled, one is supposed to make hasty protestations to the contrary. For some, conspiracy is by definition ridiculous and nonexistent, evoking a caricatured tableau of sinister figures in secret chambers. Actually, "conspiracy" is a bona fide legal concept, defined as *planning or acting together in secret, for unlawful or harmful purposes, often by illicit means.* The ruling class's major mode of operation is systemic and institutional rather than conspiratorial. No ruling interest could last long if it tried to control an entire society with the manipulations of secret cabals.

At the same time, no ruling class could survive if it were not attentive to its interests, consciously trying to anticipate, control, or initiate events. It is hard to imagine a modern state that conducted no concerted and secretive operations. In the United States, conspiracies aplenty are now a matter of public record. Just in recent decades there was the fabricated Tonkin Gulf incident, which served as an excuse for escalating the Vietnam war; Operation Phoenix, in which U.S. advisors secretly set up assassination squads that-murdered thousands of dissidents in Vietnam; the Watergate break-in and Watergate cover-up that led to the resignation of a president; the FBI COINTELPRO, involving government surveillance, infiltration, and sabotage of dissident groups; Iran-Contra, in which top leaders conspired to circumvent the law, selling arms to Iran in exchange for funds that were used in covert actions against Nicaragua; the CIA drugs-for-guns trade in Central America; covert CIA-sponsored destabilization wars in a dozen countries; and the BCCI scandal, involving what some call the most crooked bank in the world. In 1990 there was the savings-and-loans scandal, which Justice Department officials called "a thousand conspiracies of fraud, theft, and bribery," amounting to the greatest financial crime in world history.

If, by its very nature, conspiracy is secretive, some might argue its existence cannot be reliably established. Conspiracy theory defies empirical verification. The very absence of manifest activity becomes reason for the conspiracy theorist to suspect conspiracy. So the argument goes. It is a false argument, at least in regard to those investigators who do not fabricate out of thin air but dig up a great deal of evidence and testimony. Conspirators, even ones in high places, usually leave a trail of discernible involvements and attempted cover-ups that come to light at one time or another, as was demonstrated by the investigations of the above-mentioned conspiracies.

One of the major perpetrators of conspiracies is the national security state. Composed of the White House Executive Office, the secretaries of state and defense, the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Agency, the CIA, and other intelligence agencies, the national security state involves itself in secretly planned and often criminal operations around the globe. It resorts to military strikes, special forces, undercover agents, surveillance and infiltration of dissident groups,

unlawful break-ins, planting stories in the U.S. press, the training of death squads and assassination teams, terrorist campaigns to destabilize certain governments, and the like. Rulers themselves recognize the need for secret and consciously planned state action. They label it "national security." Sometimes they apply more candidly conspiratorial appellations: "covert action," "clandestine operations," and "special operations." If, for some reason, one prefers not to call these undertakings "conspiracies," then give them another name, but recognize them as consciously planned, often illegal ventures, whose existence is usually denied.

Class rule (the rule that maintains the existing politico-economic system for the benefit of the rich and powerful) is not achieved solely through the efforts of wealthy individuals and groups. Campaign donations, lobbying, and other forms of interest-group politics are only part of the story. Class rule is not only willful and particularistic but systemic and overarching. It must operate within a capitalist system that, over and above the desires of any individual elites, imposes its own systemic imperatives. These must be responded to if the system is to be maintained. The *essential* function of the state is to act as a conscious agent for maintaining the general needs of the entire capitalist system, doing what no private interest-group can do to buttress class hegemony.[3] This the state can do because it has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. It has the power to develop technologies of surveillance and control, and a host of auxiliary institutions that are either repressive or legitimating or both—as in the case of the police, courts, the law—and, of course, the military.

The military is very much a class-structured institution, as the phrase, an "officer and a gentleman," might indicate. The top brass live in opulence, with their large homes, servants, golf courses, polo fields, thoroughbreds, officers clubs, and opportunities to socialize with elites of other institutions. The military's political function is evident. Outspoken left dissidents are weeded out. A commitment to anticommunism and conservatism is the implicit rule. There are some politically progressive officers, but they are decidedly in the minority. The army has been used repeatedly against indigenous peoples and workers in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and against Third World peoples to this day. Gramsci refutes the myth of a nonpolitical military: "It is not true that

armies are constitutionally barred from making politics; the army's duty is precisely to defend the Constitution—in other words the legal form of the State together with its related institutions. Hence, so-called neutrality only means support for the reactionary side."[4]

Along with its coercive agencies, the state has access to the public wealth through a compulsory taxing system and through its power to borrow monies from the rich, which the public must eventually pay back with interest. A substantial part of this public wealth is utilized by the state to protect private wealth. The corporate class is not really willing to pay the enormous costs of protecting their own interests. Through the state, they get the public to do it for them.

The capitalist state also develops practiced coteries of policymakers who move in business, military, and government circles, those whom I have been calling the ruling elites. These individuals have a class ideology and a loyalty to the existing system. They could not otherwise move in the top echelons of power. One historian's description of the power wielders in the Woodrow Wilson administration is still apt:

> First, none of them was naive or innocent. They very seldom blundered into either success or failure. Many more times than not they won because they shrewdly picked their spots and deployed their power effectively. ... All of them, furthermore, had extended experience in business and politics ... They were also men who had to come to terms with—and practiced—the kind of routine casuistry that often seems to be inherent in the conduct of big business, big law, domestic politics, and diplomacy. They were not dishonest in the usual meaning of that term, and they were not hypocrites. They were simply powerful and influential men of this world who had concluded, from hard experience and close observation, that all of the truth all of the time was almost always dangerous. Hence they did not use all of the truth all of the time.
>
> Secondly, these American decision-makers viewed economics as of extremely great, if not of literally primary, importance in the dynamic operation of the American system. This does not mean that they were motivated by personal pocketbook considerations. It means that they thought about economics in a national sense; as an absolutely crucial variable in the functioning of the system per se, and as the foundation for constitutional government and a moral society. And all of them viewed overseas economic expansion as essential to the continued successful operation of the American free-enterprise system.

> Finally, these men shared a central conviction that the good society—and the good world—were defined by the forms and substance of Western Civilization as they had manifested themselves in the United States. ... Some were conservatives concerned to preserve aspects of the status quo that they considered particularly valuable. Others were reformers more interested in improving the existing order. But all of them shared a fundamental belief in, and a commitment to, the established system.[5]

THEORIES OF INNOCENCE

One is likely to be called a conspiracy theorist, not only if one believes that ruling-class leaders sometimes use conspiratorial methods, but if one thinks there is even such a thing as a ruling class that seeks to maintain hegemony. A critical study of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission concludes, "A conspiracy on the part of certain members of the international ruling class is not being suggested here, but rather that many of these people, who have a great deal of influence, are consciously making efforts to guide and control the direction of the world's political and socioeconomic system in their class interest."[6] But any assertion that a ruling class tries to direct the system for its own interests is, by definition, considered a conspiracy fantasy in mainstream political discourse. In this broader sense, "conspiracy" refers to something more than just illegal acts. It serves as a dismissive label applied to any acknowledgment of ruling-class power, both its legal and illegal operations.

In place of conspiracy theory, we get "somnambulist theory": those in power just do things as if walking in their sleep, without a thought to their vast holdings. Or we have "coincidence theory": by sheer chance, things just happen repeatedly and coincidentally to maintain the existing array of privileged interests, without any conscious planning or pressure from those who benefit from such interests.

Then there is "incompetence theory," or even "stupidity theory," which maintains that people at the top just don't know what they're doing; they are befuddled, incapable, and presumably not as perceptive as we. For years we heard that Ronald Reagan was a moronic, ineffectual president; his administration a "reign of errors," even as he successfully put through most of his conservative agenda, serving the interests of corporate America, the

military, and the ideological Right with which he had long been actively associated. During the Iran-Contra hearings, stupidity and incompetence were even claimed as a defense. The Tower Commission—handpicked by Reagan himself—concluded that the president was guilty of a lackadaisical management style that left him insufficiently in control of his subordinates. In fact, as some of his subordinates eventually testified in court, the president not only was informed, he initiated most of the Iran-Contra policy decisions that led to a circumvention of the law and the Constitution.[7]

Another theory of innocence is what might be called "spontaneity theory," or "idiosyncrasy theory." Stuff just happens. The event is nothing more than an ephemeral oddity, unconnected to any larger forces. In 1978, the House Select Committee on Assassinations reported that there was more than one assassin—and therefore a conspiracy—involved in the 1963 murder of President John Kennedy. In response, the *Washington Post* editorialized: "[C]ould it have been some other malcontent whom Mr. Oswald met casually? Could not as many as three or four societal outcasts, with no ties to any one organization, have developed in some spontaneous way a common determination to express their alienation in the killing of President Kennedy? ... It is possible that two persons, acting independently, attempted to shoot the President at the same time."[8] Sometimes, those who deny conspiracies create the most convoluted fantasies of all.

Studiously ignoring the evidence pointing to a conspiracy to murder Martin Luther King, Jr., one writer patronizingly concludes, "A large majority of the American people do believe in assassination conspiracies. That allows events to have large, mysterious causes instead of small, idiosyncratic ones. They like that."[9] But the question of conspiracy should be decided by an investigation of evidence, not by a priori unscientific and patronizing presumptions about the public mind. In any case, the evidence in King's assassination did not involve "large mysterious causes" but immediate actualities.[10]

Closely related to "idiosyncratic theory" is "aberration theory": secret, criminal state behavior is dismissed as an atypical departure from normally lawful behavior. For five years, beginning in 1983, the FBI carried out a surveillance of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador

(CISPES) to determine whether the group had links to international terrorism. The bureau utilized all fifty-nine of its field offices, yet uncovered not a shred of evidence to support its conspiracy theory. CISPES charged that the bureau's actions were politically motivated and part of a concerted and illegal government effort (i.e., conspiracy) to suppress opposition to U.S. involvement in Central America. The FBI had collected information on more than 13,198 people and 11,087 organizations during the CISPES investigation and refused to release the files for public scrutiny. The bureau had a long history of harassments against a wide range of protest groups, as evidenced by its illegal and widely condemned COINTELPRO campaign under the late J. Edgar Hoover. Yet the Senate Intelligence Committee found "no pattern of abuse" by the bureau and concluded that the FBI investigation of CISPES was an "aberration."[11]

In sum, those who embrace theories of innocence would have us believe that unjust social arrangements, malevolent acts, and wrongful policies are the outcome of momentary aberrations, human folly, incompetence, happenstance, isolated and deranged individuals, innocent cultural proclivities, and unintended consequences. To be sure, such things do exist, but do they explain every major development in public life? Evidence and common sense suggests something else: the rich and powerful are not oblivious to their interests and no more stupid than the rest of us.

It is accepted that coal miners might consciously direct their efforts toward advancing their interests, as might steel workers, small farmers, and school teachers. Conspiracy is charged only when one suggests that the wealthy and powerful consciously concert with intent to defend their class interests. While small farmers and steelworkers agitate publicly for their goals, seeking to enlist the support of broader publics, plutocrats and policy elites tend to move more quietly through the corridors of power, preferring that their decisions not invite public scrutiny.

Other times the corporate class openly seeks to mobilize public sentiment, thereby demonstrating the existence of a concerted power that their apologists deny. In the mid-1970s, U.S. business leaders showed increasing concern about the direction of domestic and foreign events. Third World revolutionary changes portended ill for the future of global capitalism. At

home, federal regulations on business and growing expenditures in human services were perceived as interfering with corporate interests and cutting into profits. One top executive spoke for his concurring colleagues at a meeting of business leaders in 1974: 'The have-nots are gaining steadily more political power to distribute the wealth downward. The masses have turned to a larger government." Another urged, "If we don't take action now, we will see our own demise. We will evolve into another social democracy."[12] Here, certainly, were economic elites who had an explicit awareness of their class interests.

What later became the Reagan administration's program was outlined in various business publications from the mid-1970s onward: roll back the reformist state, break the labor unions, heat up the cold war and increase military spending to meet the "Soviet challenge," substantially cut taxes for upper-income individuals and corporations, and repeal government regulations on business. Giant companies like Citibank, IBM, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Exxon, Ford, and General Motors played an increasingly active role in financing conservative research institutes, public-affairs media, and the campaigns of ideologically conservative candidates through Political Action Committees (PACs). Companies also increased their efforts to break labor unions.[13] By 1978, a responsive President Carter was dutifully implementing various right ward changes. But, as a Democrat, Carter was somewhat beholden to labor unions and lower-income voters. The business community wanted an unencumbered ideological conservative. Their support went overwhelmingly to Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election.[14] Throughout this period, corporate elites gave every indication of knowing what they wanted for themselves.[15]

Nothing said here is meant to imply that ruling-class leaders are infallible or omnipotent. Like many other people, they may overestimate their problems. They sometimes are unsure or divided about particular tactics. They occasionally are stymied by the unintended consequences of policies, by angry public reactions, and sometimes the need to maintain legitimating democratic appearances. But if they do not always succeed, they succeed often enough. They are far from infallible, but they have a plentitude of resources to minimize their losses when mistakes are made. They may not be omnipotent, but they are enormously powerful. And at times, they will

put aside democratic restraints and apply the same naked state-oppression as might any dictatorship. Whatever the limits of their power, they are as involved in class struggle as any communist.

DENYING INTENT

Conscious intent is not always denied. If the issue involves antiwar dissenters, labor unions, militant feminists, leftist guerrillas, or communists, then intent—often of a quite sinister kind—is readily ascribed. Only when talking of the dominant politico-economic elites of capitalist nations is one or another innocence theory called into play. It is recognized that revolutionaries are capable of concerted actions directed toward consciously desired goals—but not counterrevolutionaries.

Thus, one denies the existence of ruling-class power and intent. If everything happens because of innocent causality, then no one is to blame. Sometimes the innocence theorists apply what might be called "universalist theory." It places responsibility on everyone, an undifferentiated "we," which means no one in particular. "We produce cars with built-in obsolescence. Knowing the possible dangers, we continue to pollute the environment," Erich Fromm once claimed.[16] "We are all guilty of John Kennedy's assassination and we are all guilty of the Gulf war," asserted a KPFA radio commentator who was interviewing me in Janaury 1991. Sometimes the public is told that "we" must defend "our" interests abroad, including "our" oil in the Middle East and "our" investments throughout the world.

Many critiques of corporate and state policies never move beyond a liberal complaint to a radical analysis; that is, they denounce the policy but never ask why such things prevail? What interests are involved? Does anyone benefit from the victimization? On the infrequent occasions when mainstream investigators do ask why, they often come up with innocuous answers. Hence, when they ask why there is so much poverty and hunger among indigenous peoples throughout the Third World, they conclude by blaming the deficiencies of the poor themselves (as with poverty at home). Supposedly the poor need to be taught to farm, fish, or build. In fact, they usually already know how to do those things but they do not own the land

or nets, boats, and building materials. Nor do they own the factory that kills the fish by dumping toxic waste into the bay, nor the dam that floods their lands and villages, nor the corporation that destroys their orchards and strips their forests. If they are hungry, it really is because of what powerful interests are doing to them. The rich get richer when the poor get poorer. That is not a conspiracy theory, it is a reality of class society.

In a PBS television program aired several times in April 1992, host Bill Moyers pointed out the gross inequalities of the federal tax structure, how corporations avoided payments by investing overseas, how foreign firms earned hundreds of millions of dollars in the United States and paid almost no taxes, and how the tax structure was riddled with tailor-made exemptions that favored particular companies and campaign contributors. To explain why such policies prevailed, Moyers turned to his panel of "experts" and said, "Isn't this just a case of good intentions gone awry?"[17] He and the panelists proceeded to talk about the economy and the deficit, without mentioning that the existing tax policy was decidedly not good intentions gone awry but an example of how wealthy interests consciously use their influence to win special treatment under the law.

New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis noted that Indonesian troops invaded East Timor, a former Portuguese island colony in 1975, perpetrating a bloody repression that has brought death to upwards of 200,000 Timorese. Lewis asked, "Why have we done nothing about such massive inhumanity? Why have we not put pressure on Indonesia, a recipient of much American aid?"[18] (Here again the undifferentiated "we.") Getting no satisfactory response from the State Department, Lewis preferred to leave the issue as an unsettling mystery. He did inch closer to the truth when noting that "Indonesian forces used arms received from U.S. aid in the invasion—which violated American law," and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger "excoriated his aides" for letting a cable go out with that information in it. So Kissinger was fully aware of the invasion, was giving the Indonesian military the arms needed to carry it out, and wanted that fact kept secret. In other words, the White House was actively complicit in the intervention.[19]

Left unmentioned by Lewis was the entire context of the policy. The Timorese had developed a revolutionary movement dedicated to development and land reform for the benefit of the ordinary populace. The Indonesian government was a military dictatorship, protective of the interests of large, rich investors. U.S. support of Indonesian aggression was perfectly consistent with U.S. policy in other parts of the world. If we understand as much, then we move from a liberal complaint about how misdirected U.S. policy is, to a radical analysis about the actual interests involved and how the policy has been consistently applied in various parts of the world for decades, supporting large corporate interests against popular movements.

There are two models of conflict. Model #1 describes conflicts as occurring because of miscommunication; people misunderstand each other's intentions, and anticipate the worst. In defense, both sides move preemptively against the other, now caught in a conflict that no one wanted. As the conflict escalates, each side finds confirmation of aggressive intent in the other's defensive or anticipatory moves. That model certainly explains a variety of conflicts, especially at the interpersonal level.

Model #2 says that conflicts occur not because of miscommunication or irrational misunderstanding but because both sides know all too well what the other is up to. Conflict arises when there is a conscious awareness of clashing interests and the perceived potential for gain or victimization by one or another side.

Since some observers do not understand the intentions of policymakers, they assume policymakers themselves do not know what they are doing. In 1984, historian E. P. Thompson explained the whole cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union as "an irrational condition: the superpowers feel threatened because they are threats to each other. It is an acquired inertia, a self-reproducing system."[20] He is all for the innocent causalities of model #1. A few years later, the Soviets initiated substantial cuts in their military forces and withdrew troops from Eastern Europe. They also opened their political system to dissenting viewpoints, opposition parties, and competitive elections. But these measures were not enough for U.S. leaders, who demanded free-market "reforms" and the dismantling of

the socialist economy. Only when capitalism became the goal of the post-Soviet government in Russia did the supposedly "irrational" and "self-reproducing" cycle of fear and threat between Washington and Moscow come to a halt. To the extent the Soviets represented an alternative *economic* system, they were a real threat to ruling politico-economic interests in the United States. Far from being swept along by a self-reproducing emotional inertia, U.S. leaders revealed a rather precise and rational agenda: the spread of capitalism to all corners of the earth, the same agenda they have had for decades.[21] E. P. Thompson not withstanding, the cold war ended when the capitalist powers got what they had always wanted. The East-West conflict was not an example of model #1 but model #2. (This is not to deny that irrational elements and misunderstandings might not have crept in from time to time.)

In a similar vein, Lundy Bancroft takes exception to the myth that male violence against women and imperial violence against weaker nations are irrational deviations. Supposedly men batter women because they don't know what they are doing. In their torment, they lose control of themselves and lash out against those they love. But working with batterers we find "they know precisely what they are doing. They choose the amount of violence they use. They set limits for themselves that they don't cross, and use violence in particular ways in order to get the control they want."[22]

There persists "a similar mythology around imperialism." Supposedly, U.S. rulers don't know what they are doing abroad. In their "misguided attempts to help out in other parts of the world," they do unintentional damage. Liberal opponents of the Vietnam War made this argument. In the 1980s it was repeated about Nicaragua: our leaders supposedly did not realize that Nicaragua wanted peace and was not a threat. If only they understood, they would not have inflicted such punishment upon the Sandinista government and the Nicaraguan people. In fact, Nicaragua was a real threat and U.S. leaders knew it. "Any example of successful independent development not tied to the superpower batterers of the world is a tremendous danger to the ability of imperialists to continue to subjugate the rest of the world. True independence would set an example that would inspire others to attempt to gain control of their own lives and resources."[23]

DETERMINING INTENT

Are decision-makers really ill-willed and secretly conniving against us? Do they not sincerely believe in the virtue of their cause? Those questions are always asked. All individuals, interest groups, and parties believe in their own virtue and are capable of adorning their actions with the highest motives. It is hard to say at what exact psychological point their self-serving desires are transformed into genuinely held convictions about the rectitude of their cause. Sometimes they know they are lying but feel it is best for everyone that they withhold the truth; so there is a certain "sincerity" even in their mendacity. Sometimes they genuinely believe the reasons they have cooked up to defend their actions. Sincerity is a natural human product of the intensity of the interest held. The haves come to believe that their wealth—and the system that produces and protects it—benefits not only themselves but all of society.

How do we determine the intent of politico-economic elites? How do we decide that the reasons they give to justify their policies are true or false (regardless of whether *they* may think them to be true). First, by the content of the issue itself. For instance, from 1900 to 1912, a dozen or so investigative publications like *Harper's* and *Scribners* exposed the abuses and corruptions of big-business monopolies. These revelations played a significant role in the reformist political movements that together became known as the Progressive Era. Then, in a series of abrupt actions, the Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan groups bought controlling interests in these muckraking magazines. Was this a conspiracy to silence them or did the moneyed interests simply think they were a good investment, given their popularity with the reading public? The evidence tells us that the Morgan and Rockefeller people had every reason to look upon the muckrakers with something less than affection. They proceeded to install their own managers, and announced that the public was tired of exposes about monopolies. The era of muckraking investigative journalism came to an end.[24] The content of the issue, the actions of the Morgan and Rockefeller investors, makes it difficult to hide their intentions.

Second, content is closely linked to context. We can better judge intent by looking at the larger context in which the action occurs. As I tried to show

earlier, U.S. policy toward Indonesian aggression in East Timor becomes less of a puzzlement if we see how it is part of a repeated pattern in U.S. foreign policy, not a mysterious anomaly. Similar contextual patterns can be found in other policy areas. Generally, news reports are notoriously devoid of historical and political context, especially of a kind that might be too damning to the established system.

Third, sometimes the testimony of participants can reveal what is on the minds of decision-makers. Testimony is not always easy to come by, not only because of secrecy, but because much intent goes unstated. The White House tapes made public during the Watergate scandal do not reveal Nixon and Haldeman expressing their devotion to overthrowing world communism; such a goal was understood and needed no explicit reference. But not all intentions go unstated.

Consider the following. From 1984 through 1987, U.S. leaders and their faithful media commentators repeatedly charged that Nicaragua refused to agree to the Contadora plan to end hostilities in Central America.[25] In fact, having everything to gain from a cease fire, Nicaragua repeatedly announced it would sign the Contadora agreement. The U.S., at that time, had imposed an economic blockade against Nicaragua and supported armed intervention with surrogate "contra" troops in an effort to destabilize the Sandinista government. U.S. intentions were revealed in a National Security Council memorandum (August 30, 1984): "We have trumped [Nicaragua] ... We have effectively blocked Contadora group efforts to impose a second draft of the revised Contadora Act." Weeks later, Admiral John Poindexter sent a memorandum (November 23) to National Security Advisor Robert MacFarlane: "Continue active negotiations but agree on no treaty and agree to work out some way to support the contras either directly or indirectly. Withhold true objectives from staffs [emphasis added]."[26]

When the Contadora group of Central American governments produced a new pact in May 1986, and Nicaragua again agreed to sign, the *New York Times* reported that top U.S. officials convened a special meeting to deal with what one of them described as the "peace scare."[27]

Given the pattern of behavior and the testimony of participants, this was not a conspiracy fantasy but a conspiracy actuality: U.S. leaders were not interested in reaching a peaceful accord with the Sandinistas and were withholding their real intentions from the public—and even from their own staffs.

Another example of testimonial evidence: Critics long have accused the oil industry and various governments of conspiring to suppress the development of alternative energy sources in order to keep the public dependent on fossil fuels. This was dismissed as conspiracy theory. But in 1989, the Saudi oil minister told the Petroleum Association of America that "the interests of both Saudi Arabia and oil independents are best served by cooperation that keeps oil prices down and *alternative energy uneconomical* [emphasis added]."[28] If the oil moguls express to each other their opposition to alternative energy, we can conclude that we are not suffering from a conspiracy fantasy.

IS IT PARANOIA?

Those who feel threatened appear somewhat paranoid in the eyes of those who deny the existence of threat. Through most of the 1980s, the United States financed and trained a counterrevolutionary army that conducted a two-front invasion against Nicaragua, killing thousands of civilians and destroying farm cooperatives, power stations, clinics, schools, and other "soft targets." U.S. military planes repeatedly invaded Nicaraguan air space, and U.S. warships stood at the ready off both that country's coasts. The superpower batterers cut off all aid and trade, imposing a crippling economic embargo. U.S. forces mined Nicaragua's harbors and blew up its oil depots. President Reagan said he wanted the Sandinistas to cry "uncle," and Secretary of State Shultz promised to "cast out" the Sandinistas from "our hemisphere." Yet, when the beleaguered Managua government charged that the United States wanted to overthrow it, ABC news dismissed the complaint as "Sandinista paranoia" and the *Washington Post*, as "Nicaraguan paranoia."[29] Then in June 1985, Reagan and Shultz announced that the United States might have to invade Nicaragua before too long, thereby giving demonstration—if any more was needed—that the Sandinistas were not imagining things.

Richard Maltby criticized the Communist Party, USA for "too often" behaving like a "conspiracy" during the late 1940s and early 1950s. In response to harassments, infiltrations, and attacks by the FBI and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), the party developed secretive measures to protect the identity of some of its membership. For Maltby, "its insistence on secrecy" lent the party a "furtive air." "The paranoid vision of [HUAC] supporters was reflected and endorsed by the paranoia of those they persecuted."[30] But if the communists were actually being persecuted by HUAC and other government agencies, as Maltby acknowledges, then how can we call them "paranoid" for taking protective measures?

In his study of prime-time television, Todd Gitlin writes, "Some of the paranoid left saw network entertainment as a conspiracy to purvey capitalist values."[31] But is the left "paranoid" for seeing such things? It would be remarkable if a capitalist product like entertainment television were free of capitalist values. In fact, such values can be found all through its advertisements, films, and game shows. Even if these network bosses do not plot together in a secluded room, they do take into account ideological considerations, including their own—which are mostly conservative ones.[32] They also are aware of what their advertisers want, and it is a matter of public record that corporate advertisers make ideological demands and withdraw their accounts when politically offended. In an article on how right-wing forces influence TV, Gitlin himself quotes a CBS chief as saying that the preferences of corporate advertisers are "always taken into account" in "programming decisions."[33]

Furthermore, every network has a special department whose function is to censor controversial programs and films. The *New York Times* noted that although they have cut back drastically on their policing of sexual and other cultural taboos, "the network censors continue to be vigilant when it comes to overseeing the political content of television films."[34] In sum, it is difficult to see how Gitlin arrived at his clinical diagnosis that left media-critics suffer from paranoia. If evidence of conscious effort actually exists, then the critics are not paranoid.

Excellent dissident films—offering exposes on militarism, U.S. interventionism, ecology, labor-union struggles, and a host of other

subjects, rarely if ever find a berth on prime time or any time. This may be just a coincidence or it may reflect the biases of the dominant culture. But such biases do not emerge from tnin air; they, in turn, partly reflect the existing distribution of power and interest. And, as argued above, they are not sustained only by sheer momentum but also by consciously censorial efforts.

INSTITUTIONAL INTEREST

There are ultra-rightists who claim that liberals, Jews, labor leaders, communists, feminists, and homosexuals have taken over and are undermining the fabric of America. Some see the devil himself as the arch conspirator. Televangelist and sometimes presidential aspirant Pat Robertson wrote that various American presidents have been "unknowingly and unwittingly carrying out the mission, and mouthing the phrases of a tightly knit cabal whose goal is nothing less than a new order for the human race under the domination of Lucifer and his followers."[35] Some ultra-rightists have a critique of finance capitalism that superficially resembles the left's version. They see monopoly capitalism as having usurped free enterprise through a conspiracy of government controls and internationalist financiers. Once these elite conspirators are exposed and their influence is destroyed, the rightists believe, our country will return to a system of free enterprise with its independent businesses and small government.

The leftist view differs markedly in that it sees the concentration of power and wealth as part of the evolving logic of capitalism itself. Big firms take over or force out smaller competitors. They search for new markets, natural resources, and cheap labor and begin to integrate on a global scale, while waging war against labor, using both economic means and state power. "For the left, the monopolization of capital is not necessarily the result of a sneaky plot by some backroom elite; rather the system of capitalism produces monopolies and elites as natural byproducts of its own evolution."[36]

Having observed right-wing nuts who have conspiracy fantasies, some writers incorrectly conclude that every conspiracy is a fantasy—or, in any case, not worth bothering about.[37] They urge that we concentrate on

institutions and not lose sight of the "great continuities in corporate and class interest" by focusing on conspiracies.[38] To be sure, conscious planning and deliberate effort, whether conspiratorial or otherwise, is not the whole equation. People make history and its institutions but not always exactly as they want. Systemic and institutional imperatives can affect social actors in ways none of them expect. The social structure and class order prefigure much of our personal behavior, generating forces that may be intimately experienced even if remote from the proximate scene.

If Marx and Freud have anything in common—and they have very little—it is their understanding that human behavior is greatly influenced by forces removed from immediate perception. For Freud, these forces go back into the personal history of the individual, internalized within the psyche. For Marx, they extend back into history and across existing institutional and class structures. Behavior is not just self-generated by personality and disposition. There is a whole range of dispositions in any one person. What emerges is much influenced by the position the individual occupies within the social order.

But systemic imperatives are not neutral forces. Like the cultural biases discussed earlier, they are shaped in part by power and interest. In other words, the social order itself and its various institutions and much of its culture are not without intent. Society is not just an undirected conglomerate of individuals in a mass, interacting haphazardly out of private motives. Much of social intercourse is prestructured by interested parties. What is considered personally generated behavior is often behavior evoked by imperatives within the social system itself. But the system, or important parts of it, are dominated by powerful interests. As we noted in chapter 7, formally structured social institutions do not just exist with the innocence of mountains. They are there because they serve some purpose and someone's interests—or, as in the case of the state, the interest of preserving the entire system itself. Once we understand this, we can better understand the connections between immediate experience and the larger structural forces that shape that experience.

A friend of mine went to nursing school. In training, she cared for three patients. She enjoyed chatting with them, tending their needs, and lifting

their spirits—in a kind of interchange that may not be inconsequential to the healing process. She felt a real dedication to her work and was good at it. But, when put on a hospital ward, she was given twenty-five patients and could not keep up with their calls for assistance. She felt harried by the work load and anxious about not being able to give them the kind of attention they needed. In time, she learned to ignore certain requests and found herself feeling annoyed and speaking sharply to sick people. The patients saw her behavior as a deficiency in her temperament, yet she was the same conscientious person she had been before. It was the force of circumstances that had brought out another side of her personality, one that did not fit her preferred inclinations. Institutional arrangements affect the personal dimensions of our everyday life in ways not readily evident.

But what creates the "institutional arrangements"? Overlooked in this story is that the hospital was controlled by directors who drew large salaries and extracted generous profits for the corporate shareholders—some of whom numbered among the directors themselves. In order to maintain profit levels, there had to be cutbacks in staff. One nurse on an entire floor would have to do. Thus the interpersonal experiences of nurse and patient were deeply affected, as Marx would argue, by interested forces well removed from both and not directly visible to either.

It is not that the directors took wicked pleasure in overworking the nursing staff. Quite the contrary, they prefer that staff be content and pleasant to patients. But the fact that a dispirited work force is unintentional does not mean there is no interested power involved. The directors might consider improving services because they want patients to be satisfied customers. But if the improvement necessitates an increase in staff that cuts seriously into profits, then the directors can convince themselves that one nurse for twenty-five patients is sufficient. In short, if institutional arrangements are serving explicit interests, how really unintentional are the effects?

Institutions and classes do not exist as disembodied, self-generating, abstract forces. They are populated by flesh and blood people, engaged in "the Furies of private interest." There is no institution or class power that is devoid of human agency—although the human input may be obscured by the complexities of institutional structure. In 1907, the sociologist E. A.

Ross noted that as society develops so does sin. With commerce comes piracy and smuggling; with banking comes embezzlement and forgery. Many latter-day sins are impersonal. The victimizer is far removed by an elaborate organizational system from the victim. Rather than using the gun or bludgeon, as might the brigand, the impeccable gentlemen who preside over great business empires resort to bribery, false claims, safety violations, child labor, toxic dumping, war profiteering, and the like, causing material loss, physical injury, misery, and death to persons whom they never see. While their actions and decisions may harbor no malicious intent toward specific individuals, they are guilty of neglect, deception, illegality—and hability. Still, these estimable individuals never think of themselves as criminals, nor does the press or any other established opinion-maker. On the contrary, the "systemic sinners" sit on the boards of foundations, museums, churches, and universities, are given honorary degrees, and are welcomed into the best clubs.[39]

So, too, with the state and its wars and various other crimes. Those who plan, do not kill; and those who kill, do not plan." Thus, everyone can feel free of responsibility for the oppression they inflict on troublesome people at home and abroad.

The task of the investigator is to penetrate appearances and see the inner qualities and moving forces of things. "All science," Marx once said, "would be superfluous if outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided." Indeed, the reason so much of modern social science is superfluous is because it settles for the rigorous tracing of outward appearances. To move from appearance to essence means we gain a greater awareness of the realities that play upon us. We discard fatalistic resignations and do more than "rage, rage against the dying light." We try to liberate ourselves from the mythologies of spurious appearances and turn away from false idols—so better to struggle toward real democracy.

NOTES

Chapter 1 Myths of Political Quietism

1. One exception might be philosopher Barrows Dunham's attempts to treat such views in his Man Against Myth (Boston: Little, Brown, 1947).

2. "You can't fight city hall," is an expression that was heard much more frequently in the 1940s and 1950s than today, perhaps because the municipalities of the nation have themselves so declined in political influence, media visibility, and budgetary solvency.

3. For a more detailed treatment of the ruling class, see Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few,* 5th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), pp. 196-200.

4. E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People* (New York: Holt, Rine-hart & Winston, 1960), p. 8.

5. Among those who argue that public apathy is either symptomatic of contentment or desirable for stability are: Heinz Eulau, "The Politics of Happiness," Antioch Review, 16, 1956, pp. 259-264; Seymour Lipset, *Political Man* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), pp. 179-219; and Samuel Huntington and Michael Crozier, *The Crisis of Democracy* (New York: New York University Press, 1975). This latter title is a report to the Trilateral Commission. The same opinion is propagated by conservative journalists. For example, George Will writes, "Low [voter] turnouts often are signs of social health. Low political energy can be a consequence of consensus about basics": *Washington Post,* September 5, 1991.

6. John Stuart Mill, *The Subjugation of Women* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), p. 72.

7. Philip Foner (ed.). The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, vol. 2, 1850-1860 (New York: International Pubhshers, 1950), p. 437.

8. Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom,* 1855 edition (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. 84.

9. *Washington Post*, editorial, February 17, 1983.

10. See Robert Frederick Burk, *The Eisenhower Adminstration and Black Civil Rights* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1984), pp. 192-193.

11. Gore Vidal, "How to Take Back Our Country," *Nation,* June 4, 1988, p. 783.

12. Denver Post, July 24, 1988.

13. Denver Post, July 24, 1988. The Duke economist was Charles Clotfelter.

14. Robert Bork, "Civil Rights: A Challenge," *New Republic,* August 1963, pp. 21-24.

15. James Ridgeway, "Justice Beware," Village Voice, October 9, 1984, p. 14.

16. James Nathan Miller, "Ronald Reagan and the Techniques of Deception," *Atlantic Monthly,* February 1984, p. 65. By the 1990s, however, the force and scope of the Voting Rights Act was being severely diluted by a right-wing Supreme Court; for instance, Presley v. Etowah County Commission (1992).

Chapter 2 The New Age Mythology

1. For critiques of New Age practices by participants, see Martin Gardner, The New Age: Notes of a Fringe Watcher (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988); and Michael Rossman, New Age Blues (New York: Dutton, 1979). For a critical reading of recent New Age best-sellers, see Scott Tucker, "New Rage vs. New Age," *Z Magazine,* September 1992, pp. 50-51. A more sympathetic treatment is offered by Karen Trester, who sees the New Age as "a visionary movement" that challenges the status quo and existing cynicism and ennui. See her "The New Age Movement: Ideology, Practices

& Politics," unpublished monograph. Green Bay, WI, 1992. For another sympathetic treatment, see Michael D'Antonio, *Heaven on Earth* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1992).

2. Leo Buscaglia, telecast, December 11, 1984; see also his book. Living, Loving and Learning, (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1982).

3. See Charlene Spretnak, *States of Grace* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992); Dennis Lewis, "Beyond Postmodernism," *Yoga Journal*, May/June 1992, p. 81.

4. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *Final Analysis, The Making and Unmaking of a Psychoanalyst* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1990), p. 107.

5. As quoted in the Utne Reader, March/April 1987, p. 97. Est workshops, which teach a mix of Zen meditation and personal-growth affirmations, have reached over 300,000 paying customers.

6. James Lynch, "Companionship, an Important Form of Life Insurance," Prevention, February 1978, pp. 100-102; Elfriede Kristwald, "Now They Call it 'Co-Dependency,'" *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1990.

7. See the discussion in C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

8. Peter Marin, "The New Narcissism," *Harper's*, October 1975, p. 56.

9. Buscaglia, Living, Loving and Learning, p. 53.

10. Quoted in Molly Ivins, "Thanks for the Memories," *Progressive*, December 1988, p. 39. Gardner was eventually ousted from her post.

11. Margaret Noton, "Life with the Guru," unpublished manuscript, San Francisco, June 1992.

12. Marin, "The New Narcissism," p. 46, encountered New Age therapists and devotees of these persuasions.

13. Lewis, "Beyond Postmodernism," p. 81.

14. The workshop was offered by Dr. Kenneth Wapnick in Bellow Falls, Vermont, June 9, 1984.

15. Carolyn Slack Cage, letter to the *Washington Post*, May 13, 1985.

16. Some New Age groups like "Peace the 21st" are "politically involved" in their own way. They conduct group "actions" for peace by gathering once a month to meditate for an hour on world peace. These groups supposedly set up powerful waves of peace vibrations that change the course of history.

17. Charles Reich, *The Greening of America* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 305, 347, 348, and passim.

18. Letter by Chris Marsh in Natural News, May 1993 (published by Chico Natural Foods, Chico, CA).

19. Swami Sivananda, "Peace," Yoga Life, Winter 1984, p. 8.

20. Nancy Duvergne Smith, "Spiritual Despotism," New Age, March 1978, p. 37.

21. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, Against Therapy (New York: Atheneum, 1988), p. 208.

22. Marian Leighton, "Victoria WoodhuU Meets Karl Marx: Spirituality and the Radical Movement," Liberation, Fall 1977, p. 20.

23. Bart Brodsky quoted in San Francisco Bay Guardian, March 5, 1986.

24. It should be noted that most schools of Eastern religion would agree that community and communion are desirable. But the emphasis is on changing one's own behavior, not that of others; hence, the lack of political involvement.

25. *Washington Post*, January 22, 1984.

26. Valerie Vaughan, "Money: God in Action," CenterPeace (Northampton, MA), March 1977, p. 3.

27. Quoted in Smith, "Spiritual Despotism," p. 81.

28. Noton, "Life with the Guru."

29. Whole Foods chief executive officer John Mackey, from a company position paper reprinted in Utne Reader, March/April 1992, pp. 15-11.

30. L. A. Kauffman, "Tofu Politics in Berkeley," *Nation*, September 16, 1991, pp. 294-296.

31. Smith, "Spiritual Despotism," p. 38.

32. An opinion enunciated by Will Noffke, of Shared Visions, a Berkeley personal growth center: San Francisco Bay Guardian, March 5, 1986.

33. Vaclav Havel, "The End of the Modern Era," *New York Times*, Op-Ed, March 1, 1992.

34. Dusty Sklar, The Nazis and the Occult (New York: Dorset Press, 1977), pp. 1-46.

35. John de Graaf, "The Wandervogel," New Age, March 1978, p. 47; Sklar, The Nazis and the Occult.

36. De Graaf, "The Wandervogel," p. 47.

37. Masson, *Against Therapy*, pp. 94-112; Sklar, *The Nazis and the Occult*, pp. 134-139.

38. Masson, *Against Therapy*, loc. cit. After the war Jung changed his tune and claimed he had spoken up for Jewish doctors and had been in conflict with the Nazis. Masson could find no evidence to support these claims.

39. Masson, *Against Therapy*, p. 115.

40. C. G. Jung, Collected Works, vol. 18, p. 286, cited in Farhad Dalai, "The Racism of Jung," Race and Class, 29, Winter 1988, p. 14. The editors of the Collected Works appended a footnote claiming that the word "nigger" was "not invariably derogatory in earlier British and Continental usage, and

definitely not in this case." In fact, "nigger" was most certainly a derogatory term used by British officers in the nineteenth century against rebels in India and native peoples in Africa and by British leaders like Lloyd George —all well before Jung wrote. To claim that Jung was using some earlier innocent usage of the term is only one of a number of whitewash and salvaging jobs done on Jung by the Jungians.

41. See Dalai, "The Racism of Jung," pp. 1-22; also C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973; first published in 1963).

Chapter 3 Superpatriotism: The Importance of Being "Number One"

1. See chapters five through eight.

2. See Michael Parenti, *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

3. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 78. Weber recognized that the right to use physical force is ascribed to private institutions—but "only to the extent to which the state permits it" (ibid).

4. Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in *Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), p. 411.

5. Richard Ben Cramer, "Bush is Down. Now Watch Out," *New York Times*, August 18, 1992.

6. Stephen Rose, *The American Profile Poster: Who Owns What* (New York: Pantheon, 1986).

7. Acceptance speech before the Republican national convention, *New York Times*, August 21, 1992.

8. James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth* (New York: Penguin, 1992), p. 131.

9. World Health Organization Statistics cited in *New York Times*, June 27, 1990.

10. Yearbook of Labor Statistics 1989-90 (Geneva: International Labor Organization, 1990), pp. 120-186; OECD Economic Outlook (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1991), p. 136; Andrew Shapiro, "Look at the Record," *Nation,* April 27, 1992, p. 552.

11. Shapiro, " Look at the' Record"; Worldwide Total Remuneration 1991 (Valhalla, NY: Towers Perrin, 1991), pp. 12, 22.

12. Mother Jones, September/October 1992, p. 13.

13. Quoted in Ralph Martin, Jennie, The Life of Lady Randolph Churchill 1854-1895 (New York: New American Library, 1970), p. 37.

14. Clarence Lusane, "Aftermath of the U.S. Invasion: Racism and Resistance in Panama," CovertAction Information Bulletin, Spring 1991, pp. 61-63.

15. United Nations, The Impact of War on Iraq, Report to the Secretary-General on Humanitarian Needs in Iraq in the Immediate Post-Crisis Environment by a Mission to the Area Led by Mr. Martti Ahsaari, Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, March 20, 1991.

16. For more detailed accounts of the ill-effects of the U.S. invasions of Grenada, Panama, and Iraq, and the distorted way the media treated these stories, see Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality, The Politics of News Media*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

17. See Albert Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1935).

18. John Vinocur, "Pilots Who Hit Hanoi Meet to Remember—and Forget," *New York Times*, April 14, 1978.

19. Quoted in Sender Garlin, Three American Radicals (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991), p. 115.

20. Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 298.

21. George Bush, acceptance speech, Republican national convention, *New York Times*, August 21, 1992.

22. Michael Parenti, "Is Nicaragua More Democratic Than the United States?" *CovertAction Information Bulletin*, Summer 1986, pp. 48-50, 52.

23. Maxwell Geismar (ed.), Mark Twain and the Three R 's (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), pp. 179-180. The selection is originally from Twain's novel, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889).

24. Charles Nusser, letter to the *Nation*, January 6/13, 1992, p. 2.

Chapter 4 The Politics of Religiosity

1. John C. Lilly, The Center of the Cyclone (New York: Bantam Books, 1973), pp. 233-234.

2. Willis Glover, "God and Thomas Hobbes," in K. Brown (ed.) Hobbes Studies (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p. 163.

3. President Richard Nixon noted that when he had an important decision to make regarding a moral issue, "I counsel first with Billy Graham." *New York Post*, October 7, 1977. The evangelist preacher was a regular visitor to the White House during several administrations.

4. Peter Stiglin, "Apocalyptic Theology and the Right," Witness, October 1986, pp. 6-9. For a discussion of Christian millenarianism and its application to a present-day movement, see Stephen O'Leary and Michael McFarland, "The Political Use of Mythic Discourse: Prophetic Interpretation in Pat Robertson's Presidential Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 75, November 1989, pp. 433-452.

5. State of the Union message, January 27, 1987; text available in *New York Times*, January 28, 1987

6. Andrew Lipscomb (ed.), Jefferson's Works, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), pp. 223, 301.

7. Letter to William Bradford, Jr., April 1, 1774, in *The Writings of James Madison,* selection reprinted in Marvin Meyers, *The Mind of the Founder* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), p. 6.

8. Max Far rand (ed.) The Records of the Federal Convention of J 787, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 452.

9. Farrand (ed.). Records of the Federal Convention, vol. 3, p. 310. For Madison's note on the brief discussion regarding a religious test, see ibid., vol. 2, p. 468.

10. John Fitzpatrick (ed.). *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 30 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 321; also Paul Boiler, Jr., *George Washington and Religion* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), pp. 88-89. On Jefferson and Madison, see citations in notes 6 and 7.

11. While governor of California, Ronald Reagan supported and signed into law one of the nation's most liberal abortion bills. Roe vs. Wade was decided by the Nixon-appointed Burger Supreme Court. In December 1969, while serving in the House of Representatives, Bush endorsed free choice on abortion.

12. George Bush interviewed on NBC's "Dateline," as reported in *San Francisco Chronicle,* August 14, 1992.

13. *New York Times*, January 28, 1992; see also *Washington Post*, January 18, 1991.

14. San Francisco Chronicle, August 18, 1992; San Francisco Examiner, August 29, 1992.

15. Excerpts from all three statements can be found in the *New York Times*, August 30, 1992.

16. For an early critique of the privatized view of evil, see sociologist E. A. Ross, *Sin and Society,* An Analysis of Latter-Day Iniquity (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1907).

17. On the Christian Right, see Sara Diamond, Spiritual War, The Politics of the Christian Right (Boston: South End Press, 1989); Jeremy Rifkin and Ted Howard, "Another Nation Under God," *In These Times,* December 19, 1979-January 8, 1980, pp. 12-14; Fred Clarkson, "Christian Reich," Mother Jones, November-December 1991, pp. 16-18; "Pulpit Politics," Time, August 31, 1992, p. 34; and Kate Cornell, "The Covert Tactics and Overt Agenda of the New Christian Right," *Covert Action Quarterly,* Winter 1992-93, pp. 46-51.

18. Pat Robertson, *The New World Order* (Waco, TX: Word Pubhshing, 1991), p. 228.

19. Pat Robertson, undated fundraising letter, summer 1992, quoted in several places including: Molly Ivins, "Notes from Another Country," *Nation,* September 14, 1992, p. 248.

20. *New York Times,* May 15, 1992.

21. Quoted in Parade Magazine, January 4, 1987.

22. *Washington Post,* December 11, 1984.

23. The two brief times I heard her on television. Mother Teresa, herself, sounded more like a crabby scold than a loving saint. She is known to be impatient with her staff over petty matters, yet she could counsel victims to forgive mortal injustices perpetrated against them.

24. Karl Marx, *Capital,* vol. 1 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1976), p. 165.

25. *New York Times,* September 25 and 26, 1977.

26. A Minnesota Law Enforcement Division investigation into an annuity fund offered by Graham found that it was not in compliance with state registration laws: *New York Times*, September 30, and October 9, 16, and 28, 1977.

27. *New York Times,* August 23 and October 8, 1987

28. *New York Times*, Sepftember 5 and 26, 1986.

29. *New York Times*, March 21, April 19 and 30, May 16 and 30, June 6 and 14, 1988.

30. *New York Times*, October 6 and 25, 1989.

31. *New York Times*, February 8 and April 2, 1987; September 14, 1989.

32. See the investigative report "Televangehsm" on ABC-TV's "Primetime Live," November 21, 1991.

33. "Primetime Live," November 21, 1991.

34. From a "Success in Life" televised show with Rev. Robert Tilton, February 5, 1991.

35. The woman in question gave a complete expose in Penthouse, July 1988.

36. *New York Times*, October 15, 18, and 19, 1991.

37. *New York Times*, March 21 and April 27, 1987.

38. See the discussion in chapter 9, "Racism and the Ideology of Slavery."

39. For accounts of seventeenth-century witch hunts, see Eugen Weber (ed.). *The Western Tradition* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1959), pp. 397-406.

40. Karl Marx, "The Class Struggle in France," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), p. 249.

41. Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther in Mid-Career 1521-1530 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 375.

42. The quotations of Luther are from his "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants," in Robert C. Schultz (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 46 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 49-55.

43. Leo Gershoy, *The French Revolution and Napoleon* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1933), pp. 30-33.

44. Reinhard Bendix, *Work and Authority in Industry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 68; Sidney Fine, Laissez-Faire and the General Welfare State (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), pp. 117-125; and Liston Pope, Mill-hands and Preachers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942).

45. Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper, 1980), p. 223.

46. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, pp. 351-352fn.

47. Joe Conason, "The Religious Right's Quiet Revival," *Nation*, April 27, 1992, p. 541.

48. See, for instance, Nino Lo Bello, Vatican, U.S.A. (New York: Trident Press, 1973).

49. The Supreme Court did uphold state sales taxes on the sale of religious articles: *New York Times*, January 18, 1990.

50. Bornkamm, Luther in Mid-Career, p. 357.

51. For a statement by one of the founders of that movement, see Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Gospel for the Social Awakening* (New York: Association Press, 1950).

52. See Leonardo Boff, Church: Charisma and Power (New York: Crossroads, 1985) for a statement of liberation theology by one of its foremost theorists; also Jose Miranda, Marx and the Bible (Maryknoll, NY:

Orbis Books, 1974) and Jose Miranda, Communism in the Bible (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987). For an overall discussion, see H. Mark Roelofs, "Liberation Theology: The Recovery of Biblical Radicalism," American Political Science Review, 82, June 1988, pp. 549-566.

53. *New York Times*, December 27, 1984. By 1988, the combination of Vatican pressures, death squads, and U.S. funding of Latin American social science were taking their toll. As reported in the *New York Times*, July 27, 1988, "adherents of liberation theology were de-emphasizing Marxist concepts, focusing more on issues of spirituality and growing more flexible in political and economic analysis ... following the shift of Latin American social scientists away from 'dependency theory.'"

54. *Los Angeles Times,* September 4, 1984; *Washington Post*, September 4, 1984; Attenzione, May 1981, pp. 16-20; Guardian, April 19, 1989.

55. Penny Lernoux, "Opus Dei and the 'Perfect Society,'" *Nation,* April 10, 1989, pp. 482-487: Curtis Bill Pepper, "Opus Dei, Advocatus Papae," *Nation,* August 3/10, 1992, pp. 139-140.

56. Carl Bernstein, "The Holy Alliance," Time, February 4, 1992, pp. 28-32; David Willey, God's Politician, John Paul at the Vatican (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

Chapter 5 The Stampede from Class

1 . For a treatment of class bigotry as practiced in the entertainment media, see Michael Parenti, *Make-Believe Media, The Politics of Entertainment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), chapters 5, 6, and passim.

2. Specifics regarding the exploitative nature of capitalism at home and abroad have been treated elsewhere in much detail by me and others and will not be repeated herein. For those wishing to explore the point further, see Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few*, 5th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 6th ed. forthcoming; and Michael Parenti, *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989) and the literature cited therein.

3. According to a recent study by the Federal Reserve Board and the Internal Revenue Service, *People's Weekly World*, October 3, 1992.

4. For details on ruling-class organization, see G. William Domhoff, *The Powers That Be* (New York: Vintage, 1979) and his Who Rules America Now? (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

5. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Pubhshers, 1971), p. xi. The observation is made by Gramsci's translators, Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith.

6. See chapter 7, "Monopoly Cuhure."

7. Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Retreat from Class* (London: Verso, 1986).

8. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985).

9. Carl Becker made the same point about the thirteenth-century writings of Dante and St. Thomas on the nature of monarchy and the natural law; see his, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), pp. 4-6, 11-12.

10. On how the corporate-owned communication system controls ideas and information and suppresses dissident views, see Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality, The Politics of News Media,* 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

12. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 90.

13. Francesca Freedman, "The Internal Structure of the American Proletariat: A Marxist Analysis," *Socialist Revolution* 5, Oct.-Dec. 1975, p. 68.

14. For further development of some of these points see chapter 7, "Monopoly Culture."

15. Mary Jackman and Robert Jackman, *Class Awareness in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 2. The Jackmans are just two of many bourgeois theorists whose approach to class requires a simplification and light-headed dismissal of Marxism. Nicholas Abercrombe and John Urry, Capital, Labour and the Middle Classes (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983), note that American social science treats class and status as coterminous and overlook the important distincton of relation to the means of production.

16. Freedman, "The Internal Structure of the American Proletariat ..." p. 55.

17. Freedman, "The Internal Structure of the American Proletariat ..." p. 65.

18. I heard this statement expressed at three different panels during the Gramsci conference at Amherst, Massachusetts, in April, 1987. This conference did relatively little for Antonio Gramsci but a good deal for anti-class theorists.

19. Some writers like Poulantzas go so far as to argue that only through conscious class struggle and pohtical action does any social formation qualify as a class. He seems to be saying that classes can be self-defining according to the ideological orientations they adopt: Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1973).

20. See the discussion on class struggle in Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, p. 49ff.

21. John Downing, *The Media Machine* (London: Pluto Press, 1980), p. 18.

22. "New Subjects, New Social Commitments: An Interview with Michelle Perrot," *Radical History Review* 37, 1987, p. 27.

23. Jacques Arnault, *Les Ouvriers Americans* (Paris: Notre Temps/Monde, 1972); Andrew Levinson, The Working Class Majority (New York: Penguin, 1974).

24. Gramsci conference. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, July 1987.

25. *New York Times,* April 24, 1978.

26. For a detailed treatment of class power in the U.S., see Parenti, *Democracy for the Few.*

Chapter 6 System without Spirit: The Relevance of Marx

1. By translating economic depression into psychological depression—rather than into riotous or revolutionary action—the unemployed inadvertently help maintain the stability of the system. Rather than blaming the corporate economy that is creating so much want in the midst of overabundance, they unconsciously (or sometimes quite consciously) blame themselves. For some classic sociological studies on this phenomenon, see Robert and Helen Lynd, Middletown in Transition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973); and Marie Jahoda et al, Marienthal: *The Sociography of an Unemployed Community* (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1971, originally published in 1933).

2. See chapter 8 on class bigotry.

3. On class biases in the law, see Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few,* 5th ed., (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), chapter 8.

4. *Washington Post*, June 27, 1985.

5. The First Lady's spokeswoman Anna Perez, quoted in *Washington Post*, December 20, 1991.

7. *New York Times,* April 14, 1982.

8. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, in *Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), p. 113.

9. The quotation is from a May 5, 1983, ABC television advertisement sponsored by the National Association of Broadcasters, May 5, 1983. Other examples of this business ideology are too numerous to list.

10. Irving Howe, quoted in Newsday, April 21, 1986.

11. Quoted in Slava Tetekhin, "Perestroika in the Soviet Union," *Political Affairs,* July 1991, pp. 10-11.

12. On capitalism and imperialism, the reader is referred to two of my earlier works: *Democracy For the Few,* and *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

13. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* p. 112.

14. Irving Kristol, *Two Cheers for Capitalism* (New York: Basic books, 1978).

15. For a discussion of the social costs of mining, see Grey Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (forthcoming).

16. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 182.

17. The reference here is to Talcott Parsons, whose anti-class work has predominated in much of the social sciences. See his *Toward a General Theory of Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951).

18. The classic example of this pluralist approach is Robert Dahl's *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961). For critiques of pluralism, see my *Power and the Powerless* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978) and *Democracy for the Few*.

19. See Money Matters, Newsletter of Working Assets Money Fund, Winter 1991-92, p. 2.

20. Robert Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), pp. 161-162; and Fred Gottheil, *Marx's Economic Predictions* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 131-149.

21. Albert Szymanski, "Trends in the American Class Structure," *Socialist Revolution,* 2, July/August 1972, p. 103; and Heilbroner, *The Worldly*

Philosophers, p. 162. During prolonged recessions, the number of self-employed tends to climb somewhat as people who cannot get jobs seek to survive by opening small businesses, millions of which fail each year.

22. The Working Class—the Leading Force of the World Revolutionary Process (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), p. 55.

23. V. D. Zotov, *Marxist-Leninist Theory of Society* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), pp. 121-122.

24. Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress, "The Concentration of Wealth in the United States," Washington, DC, July 1986; also the study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, as reported in Mother Jones, January 1988, p. 56.

25. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 report, see *Washington Post*, May 29, 1992; Marc Miringoff, The Index of Social Health (Tarrytown, NY: Fordham Institute for Innovation in Social Policy, 1992); Isaac Shapiro, *White Poverty in America* (Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 1992); Oakland Tribune, September 10, 1992; *Washington Post*, September 2, 1986; and NPR report by Fred Harris, former member of the Kerner Commission, March 2, 1988.

26. Zotov, *Marxist-Leninist Theory of Society*, pp. 121-122.

27. *Washington Post*, March 14, 1992; NPR "Morning Edition," February 24, 1992; Guardian, January 15, 1992; *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1989 and July 10, 1992; Seattle Times, August 23, 1992.

28. *New York Times*, June 16, 1988.

29. Walden Bello, *Brave New World? Strategies for Survival in the Global Economy* (San Francisco: Food First, 1988); Susan George, *A Fate Worse Than Debt* (New York: Grove Press, 1988); Zotov, *Marxist-Leninist Theory of Society*, p. 125.

30. Gottheil, *Marx's Economic Predictions*, pp. 165-168. Engels's confidence in the emergence of revolutionary class consciousness was not

much stronger than Marx's.

31. See Michael Parenti, *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

32. "The British Miners' Strike," Daily World, August 2, 1985.

33. Peter Worsley, *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

Chapter 7 Monopoly Culture

1. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), p. 311.

2. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* edited by Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 238.

3. G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 39.

4. Michael Walzer, "Civil Disobedience and Corporate Authority," in Philip Green and Sanford Levinson (eds.), *Power and Community* (New York: Pantheon, 1969), p. 226.

5. Matthew Josephson, *The Robber Barons* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1962), p. 317.

6. Kenneth Langton and M. Kent Jennings, "Political Socialization and the High School Civics Curriculum in the United States," *American Political Science Review,* 57, September 1968, pp. 852-867. The Texas legislature mandated that high-school economics should be taught "with emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits": *Washington Post*, December 25, 1981.

7. Betty Medsger, "The Tree' Propaganda That Floods the Schools," *Progressive,* December 1976, p. 42. On how schools serve the capitalist

order, see Joel Spring, Education and the Rise of the Corporate State (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972); Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America (New York: Basic Books, 1976); and Fred Pincus, "Big Business Barges into Classrooms," Guardian, December 22, 1982, and his "Grooming the Next Generation of Capitalists," Guardian, February 15, 1984. On the political slant in children's books, see Betty Bacon (ed.), How Much Truth Do We Tell the Children? The Politics of Children's Literature (Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 1988),

8. Roger Johnson, "Cultural Evolution and War: From Science to Social Science," Bulletin of the International Society for Research on Aggression, 13, 1991, pp. 7-10. Ellen Coughlin, "Scholars See Possible Conflict in Academics' Business Ties," Chronicle of Higher Education, October 21, 1981; see also Jerome Karabel and A. H. Halsey (eds.). Power and Ideology in Education (New York: Oxford, 1977). Joseph LaPalombara proudly called upon his fellow political scientists to "help banks and corporations make better assessments" in their overseas ventures. See his "Assessing the Political Environment for Business," PS, 15, Spring 1982, pp. 180-186.

9. Joan Roelofs, "Foundations and Social Change: The Mask of Pluralism," unpublished paper, Keene State College, n.d.

10. For instance, see Robert Weissman, "How Harvard Is Ruled," in John Trumpbour (ed.). How Harvard Rules (Boston: South End Press, 1989), pp. 33-47; and other selections in that volume.

11. When the student body at Stanford University voted in the late 1960s to name their football team the "Robber Barons," in recognition of how the founder, Leland Stanford, had made his millions, the trustees suppressed the vote and themselves chose a less unsettling team name.

12. For numerous examples, see Philip Meranto et al. Guarding the Ivory Tower: Repression and Rebellion in Higher Education (Denver, CO: Lucha Publications, 1985). For earlier decades, see Ellen Schreclcer, *No Ivory Tower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Robert Maclver, Academic Freedom In Our Time (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955).

13. Quoted in Elizabeth Mensch, "The History of Mainstream Legal Thought," in David Kairys (ed.). The Politics of Law (New York: Pantheon, 1982), p. 20.

14. Duncan Kennedy, "Legal Education as Training for Hierarchy," in Kairys, The Politics of Law, pp. 46-48. For an historical perspective, see Michael Tigar and Madeleine Levy, Law and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977); and Morton Horowitz, The Transformation of American Law, 1780-1860 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977).

15. Meranto et al, *Guarding the Ivory Tower*

16. E. Richard Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine Men* (Berkeley: University of Cahfornia Press, 1960), pp. 61-63.

17. Bernard Winter, M.D., "Health Care: The Problem is Profits," *Progressive,* October 1977, p. 16.

18. David Himmelstein and Steffie Woodhandler, "Medicine as Industry," *Monthly Review,* April 1984, pp. 13-25.

19. John Ehrenreich (ed.). *The Cultural Crisis of Modern Medicine* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

20. Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality: The Politics of News Media,* 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), chapter 3.

21. See Parenti, *Inventing Reality* for a fuller exposition of these points.

22. Michael Parenti, *Make-Believe Media, The Politics of Entertainment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

23. Grace Glueck, "Money Talks in the Art World," *New York Times,* June 12, 1983; Tim Patterson, "High Culture Sells Ruling-Class Roots," Guardian, June 7, 1978; and Oniria Brown, "Corporate Elite Sponsors Art Museums," Guardian, June 13, 1979. For a listing of over five-hundred

corporations that contributed to the Lincoln Center performances in New York, see *New York Times,* May 21, 1986.

24. Adolfo Sanchez Vazquez, *Art and Society* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970; and Norman Goldberg, "A Survey of Bourgeois Arts—Death in the Final Act," Political Affairs, April 1978, pp. 25-31.

25. Norman Goldberg, "The State of the Arts," Political Affairs, August-September 1984, p. 17; see also Serge Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

26. Sidney Lens, "Disorganized Labor," *Nation*, February 24, 1979. On the dechne of organized labor, see various monthly editions oi Economic Notes, 1990-91.

27. Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America,* p. 162 and passim.

28. This was a conscious policy on the part of some moneyed leaders. See Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine Men,* pp. 13-59.

29. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks', also Edward Greer, "Antonio Gramsci and 'Legal Hegemony'," in Kairys, The Politics of Law, p. 306.

Chapter 8 Class Myth and Class Bigotry

1. Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science, and Religion and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), pp. 107-108, 111, 113, 114-118.

2. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, n.d., originally published in 1927), p. 4.

3. Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934).

4. For more on the interests served by U.S. foreign policy, see Michael Parenti, *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

5. Tatyana Vorozheikina, "Power Struggle in Russia: Why Not Try Democracy?" *Nation*, May 4, 1992, pp. 594-596.

6. For a fuller exposition of this theme see Parenti, *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race*.

7. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, chapters 4 and 5; also the discussion in chapter 9.

8. Quoted and cited in R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: New American Library, 1954, originally published 1926), p. 56.

9. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 56.

10. William Hinton, Fanshen, *A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 27.

11. John C. Miller, *The Federalist Era* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 109.

12. Hamilton, in Max Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937, 1966), pp. 288-289 and passim.

13. Justice Samuel Chase, quoted in Russell Galloway, *The Rich and the Poor in Supreme Court History 1790-1982* (Greenbrae, CA: Paradigm Press, 1982), p. 28.

14. Nelson W. Aldrich, Jr., *Old Money* (New York: Vintage, 1988), pp. 11-27. For a critical account of nineteenth-century American capitalists, see Matthew Jo-sephson. *The Robber Barons* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1932).

15. Conkling, quoted in Matthew Josephson, The Politicos 1865-1896 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1938), p. 256.

16. Josephson, *The Politicos,* pp. 256-257.

17. W. A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst (New York: Bantam, 1961), p. 560.

18. George Bush, CBS-TV report, October 25, 1988; also Bush's remarks at the Republican National Convention, August 20, 1992.

19. *Washington Post*, October 13, 1984. See also chapter 4 for a further discussion of liberation theology.

20. Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958, originally published 1845), pp. 54-55.

21. Ralph Martin, Jennie, The Life of Lady Randolph Churchill, 1854-1895 (New York: New American Library, 1970), pp. 153-154.

22. Junius Irving Scales and Richard Nickson, Cause at Heart (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987).

23. *Progressive,* March 1992, p. 12.

24. A. Hamilton Gibbs, Gun Fodder (Boston: Little, Brown, 1924), p. 12. What Gibbs described as "un-English," the enthusiastic manner in which the two strangers greeted each other, refers really to an upper-class reserve. As noted by Gibbs himself, the English working men were warm and outgoing. Thus, the image of the reserved English is treated as a national character type when it is really a class type.

25. On the life-styles and fortunes of the rich, see Jacqueline Thompson, The Very Rich Book (New York: William Murrow, 1981); Ferdinand Lundberg, The Rich and the Super-Rich (Secaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart, 1968); E. Digby Baltzell, The Protestant Establishment (New York: Random House, 1964); G. William Domhoff, Who Rules America Now? (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983); and Robert Coles, Privileged Ones, The Well-Off and the Rich in America (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

26. Walt Harrington, "The Sons of Success," *Washington Post* Magazine, December 11, 1983, pp. 18-19, 43-46.

27. Coles, Privileged Ones, pp. 104-105,168-179,499, 500-501, 516-517, 534.

28. The Washingtonian, June 1988.

29. Studs Terkel, Working (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 12.

30. Raj Vasil, Political Democracy in India (Singapore: Faculty of Arts and Sciences, National University of Singapore, 1983) pp. 13-14.

31. Vasil, Political Democracy in India, p. 15.

32. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 221.

33. American Museum, September 1789, Philadelphia, quoted in Herbert Aptheker, The American Revolution 1763-1783 (New York: International Publishers, 1960), pp. 251-252.

34. Arthur Young writing in 1771, cited in Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 224.

35. Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty (London: Quartet Books, 1978), p. 92.

36. Quoted in Robert Heilbroner, The Worldly Philosophers (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), pp. 276-277.

37. David Reisman and Nathan Glazer, "Intellectuals and Discontented Classes," in Daniel Bell (ed.). The Radical Right (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), pp. 118, 125, 135.

38. Edward Banfield, The Unheavenly City (Boston: Little Brown, 1970), pp. 61-62, 139.

39. Banfield, The Unheavenly City, p. 142.

40. Felix Rohatyn, New York Review of Books, April 16, 1981.

41. Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities (New York: Crown, 1991).

42. Reagan made the remark on "Good Morning America," ABC-TV, January 31, 1984; also quoted by Sydney Schanberg in *New York Times*, February 4, 1984.

43. See Jacqueline Jones, The Dispossessed: America's Underclasses from the Civil War to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

44. George Gilder, Wealth and Poverty (New York: Basic Books, 1981), pp. 23, 34, 103-106.

45. Gilder, Wealth and Poverty, pp. 82-91 and passim.

46. For a sample of this genre, see Lawrence Mead, The New Politics of Poverty: The Non-working Poor in America (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

47. Robin Anderson, "The Press and El Salvador," Lies of Our Times, January 1990, p. 6. The priest was Ignacio Matin-Baro, who was murdered by the Salvadoran military in 1989.

48. Marvin Gettleman, "Charity and Social Class in the United States, 1874-1900," parts I and II, American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 22, April 1963 and July 1963, pp. 313-329, 417-426.

49. For instance, see Jonathan Rieder, Canarsie, The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

50. Michael Katz, *The Undeserving Poor* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), p. 42.

51. See Katz, *The Undeserving Poor* and the literature summarized therein; also Ken Lasson, The Workers (New York: Grossman, 1972); Ann Marie Rousseau, Shopping Bag Ladies: Homeless Women Speak About Their Lives (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1982); and Jones, The Dispossessed.

52. Mary McKenney, "Class Attitudes and Professionalism," Quest, 3, Spring 1977, p. 52.

53. Robert Coles, "Children and the Bomb," *New York Times Magazine*, December 8, 1985, p. 62; see also his five-volume study: Children of Crisis.

54. David Gersh, "The Corporate Elite and the Introduction of IQ Testing in American Public Schools," in Michael Schwartz (ed.). The Structure of Power in America (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987), pp. 163-184.

55. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, Poor People's Movements (New York: Vintage, 1979); and Charles Haar and Daniel Fessler, The Wrong Side of the Tracks (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986). A Catholic jjriest, who helped organize consumer and small-business cooperatives among poor people in Louisiana, cited a continual succession of harassments and raids by private citizens and officials against such efforts: "Black Journal," NET documentary film, June 23, 1969.

56. Dr. Charlotte Kirkham, quoted in Michael Medved, Hospital: The Hidden Lives of a Medical Center (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), p. 206.

57. Robert Bruno, "Reach for Real Welfare Reform," *Z Magazine*, July/ August 1992, pp. 97-99; see also William J. Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Chapter 9 Racism and the Ideology of Slavery

1 . Until the nineteenth century in Southwest Africa, a variety of peoples lived peacefully side by side with only occasional skirmishes. This international amity prevailed because the land and game were plentiful. With the introduction of firearms from Europe, the tribes were able to kill larger numbers of animals and secure more food. Their populations increased. The advent of White hunters only further depleted the wild herds. By 1830, the various tribes were at war with each other on a serious scale. By the first decade of the twentieth century, they were all pretty much exterminated by the Germans: Jon Bridgman, The Revolt of the Hereros (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 31-37 and passim.

2. Binghamton Collective, "Race and Class in Twentieth Century Capitalist Development," Insurgent Sociologist, 20, Fall 1980, pp. 3-23.

3. Louise Derman-Sparks, "Teaching Children Not to Hate," *Washington Post*, August 6, 1989; also Louise Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force, Anti-Bias Curriculum (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989); and Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson, Open Minds to Equality: A Source Book of Learning Activities (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983).

4. Yahweh threatens the same destruction upon the Israelites themselves because of the "abominations" they commit, such as adultery, whoring, lewdness, and blasphemy. Personal vice upsets Yahweh more than mass murder. He also threatens destruction when they show an interest in other gods. See all of Jeremiah and various other passages of the Bible.

5. See the discussion on the inverted morality of superpatriotism in chapter 3.

6. Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, The Growth of the American Republic, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 537-538.

7. Robert William Fogel and Stanley Engermaan, Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974). As might be expected, this book won much praise from the mainstream corporate press.

8. See also Jan Rocha, "Slavery on Increase in Brazil," Manchester Guardian Weekly, May 17, 1992.

9. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book One, Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

10. *Politics*, Book One, Chapter Six.

11. I. F. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1988), p. 45.

12. Quoted in G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 417 and p. 638, n. 17; M. I. Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology (London: Chatto and Windus, 1980), p. 120.

13. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates*, p. 44. Stone notes that Alcidamas is the author of Messeniacus, a lost work whose title suggests that it may have dealt with the Messenian slave revolt against Sparta.

14. Politics, Chapters Five and Six.

15. Donald Kagan, Pericles of Athens and the Birth of Democracy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), pp. 67-68.

16. Thucydides mentions the mass desertion of "more than 20,000 slaves, the majority of whom were skilled workers" from Athens during the Spartan siege in the late fifth century B.C.: Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars (New York: Penquin, 1972), Book VII, p. 494.

17. The references to Ignatius, Augustine, and Ambrose and most of the other information on Christian attitudes are from Ste. Croix, The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World, pp. 419-421. Ste. Croix observes (p. 422) that in the early Christian era, some Roman lawyers maintained that slavery was contrary to the natural law {contra naturam) because it depended on force. But apparently they were all pagans. Even they accepted slavery as an institution common to all peoples {ius gentium): Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology, p. 98. Quoting Ernst Tro-eltsch, Finley concludes that Christianity accepted slavery as "part of the general law of property" and actually strengthened slave relations with moral guarantees: ibid., p. 15.

18. Ste. Croix, The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World, pp. 422-423.

19. Ste. Croix, The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World, p. 424.

20. Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology, p. 104. See also, Ste. Croix, The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World, p. 409.

21. Quoted in Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts,* 5th ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1987), p. 42.

22. A letter written in 1820: Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts,* pp. 47-48.

23. Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, pp. 53-78; also Page Smith, *Trial by Fire,* A Peoples History of the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Penguin, 1982), passim.

24. See Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts,* pp. 125-139 and passim; James Mellon, (ed.), Bullwhip Days, The Slaves Remember (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988); and Charles Nichols, Many Thousand Gone (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963).

25. John Wilkes Booth, 1864 letter reproduced in Theodore Roscoe, The Web of Conspiracy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1959), p. 534.

26. Frederick Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom (New York: Dover Pubhcations, 1969), p. 83.

27. Ibid., p. 80.

28. Smith, *Trial by Fire*, passim.

29. Smith, *Trial by Fire*, p. 19.

30. All quotations and information on the martial attributes of the antebellum South are from Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, pp. 67-70.

31. Smith, *Trial by Fire*, pp. 706-710 and passim.

32. Smith, *Trial by Fire*, p. 657; see also Burke Davis, Sherman's March (New York: Vintage, 1988), pp. 29 and 247.

33. Justice of the Peace Joseph Denny of Warren County, Virginia, before a congressional committee, quoted in Smith, *Trial by Fire*, p. 718.

34. Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology, p. 99.

35. Ste. Croix, The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World, p. 417.

36. William Julius Wilson, The Declining Significance of Race (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 25.

37. Jack Gratus, The Great White Lie (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p. 265.

39. L. S. Stavrianos, Global Rift (New York: William Morrow, 1981), pp. 62-68.

40. Richard Drinnon, Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-hating and Empire Building (New York: New American Library, 1980), pp. 17-19.

41. Drinnon, Facing West, pp. 16-20. The Puritans not only hated the Indians, they hated Morton's fraternization with them and had him chained and imprisoned. See also the discussion in Michael Parenti, *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 83-87.

42. Drinnon, Facing West, p. 199n. In that same encounter, one soldier, upon shooting an infant, delivered himself of imperialism's dehumanizing logic: "Kill the nits, and you'll have no lice."

43. Some of these examples are cited in Parenti, The Sword and the Dollar, pp. 84-87.

44. This is true not only in the United States; consider the dramatic differences between Black and White workers in the South African gold mines: *New York Times*, February 24, 1980.

45. Aristotle, Politics, Book Seven, Chapter Ten; see also Plato's Laws, Book Six.

46. See, for instance, Stavrianos, Global Rift, pp. 115-116.

47. Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, pp. 164-166 and passim; Kenneth Stamp, The Peculiar Institution (New York: Knopf, 1956), passim; and Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), pp. 36-56.

48. See for instance, Scott Nearing, The Making of a Radical (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 16; and Harry Targ, "Plant Closing and Class Struggle," Nature, Society and Thought, 3, January 1990, p. 16.

49. For instance, Robert Minton and Stephen Rice, "Using Racism at San Quentin," *Ramparts,* January 1970, pp. 19-24.

50. Most recently in 1992, the Los Angeles Police sought to provoke incidents between the Crips and the Bloods, two rival gangs that had formed an alliance against police brutahty and for community change. The LAPD's role was reported in a radio documentary by Christian Parenti on KPFA (Berkeley and San Francisco) in July 1992; also Mike Davis "LA: The Fire This Time," CovertAction Information Bulletin, Summer 1992, p. 17.

51. Representative Don Edwards, "More Racism from the G.O.P.," *New York Times*, June 4, 1991.

Chapter 10 Race and the Hidden Dimension of Class

1. In part, this is what is meant by thinking dialectically. See Bertell Oilman, Dialectical Investigations (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 13.

2. Richard Child Hill, "Race, Class and the State," Insurgent Sociologist, 10, Fall 1980, pp. 45-59.

3. Sheila Collins, "Racism and Class: A Response to Vicente Navarro," Monthly Review, 39, June 1987, p. 31.

4. Studies of these conflicts are almost always couched in an ethnic idiom. See, for instance, Jonathan Rieder, Canarsie, The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

5. For testimony to this effect, see *Washington Post*, March 28, 1983; also Vicente Navarro, "Critical Comments on 'Racism and Class,'" Monthly Review, 39, June 1987, pp. 19-27. A critical study of scarcity psychology is

Gerald Gill, Meanness Mania: The Changed Mood (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

6. See the discussion in chapter 6 on the growing concentrations of wealth and poverty throughout the world.

7. Irwin Silber, "White Workers and Racism," Guardian, December 27, 1978, p. 21.

8. In a much-debated book, The Declining Significance of Race, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), William J. Wilson notes that middle-class African Americans have enjoyed an impressive upward mobility but the "Black underclass" is sinking deeper into economic desperation, with increasingly Umited job prospects and astronomical unemployment rates. Affirmative-action programs help talented and educated Blacks, but what is also needed are "public policy programs to attack inequality on a broad class front ... directly confronting the pervasive and destructive features of class subordination." Wilson's book evoked a condemnation from the Association of Black Sociologists, who believed that it could encourage a retreat from the politics dedicated to overcoming racial discrimination: Malcolm Scully, "Is Race Less Important Than Class?" Chronicle of Higher Education, September 18, 1978, p. 7.

9. See, for instance, Carl Gershman, "The Black Plight: Race or Class?" *New York Times* Magazine, October 5, 1980, p. 24ff. The neoconservative Gershman applauds Wilson's thesis that class plays a more significant role than race, and he defines "class" as "economic problems that exist within [the Black] ghetto."

10. Arthur Marwick, *Class, Image and Reality in Britain, France, and the U.S.A. Since 1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 105.

11. Daniel Singer, "Turncoats and Scapegoats," *Nation,* August 3/10, 1992, p. 136.

12. See the discussion on class experience and class injury in chapter 8.

13. See the discussion in chapter 8.

14. Malcolm Gladwell, "Public Health Experts Turn to Economic Ills," *Washington Post*, November 26, 1990; also Vicente Navarro's comments in *New York Times*, December 6, 1990 and his report "Race or Class vs. Race and Class: Mortality Differentials in the U.S.," The Lancet, v. 336, November 17, 1990, pp. 1238-1240 for further criticisms of how the U.S. health establishment ignores class differences and income inequahties in the area of public health.

15. For a stereotyping of ghetto fathers, see Elijah Anderson, Streetwise, Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992). For critical comments, see the review by Micaela di Leonardo in the *Nation,* August 17-24, 1992, p. 184. See also the discussion on divorce and child support in chapter 11 and the citations therein.

16. Nell Irvin Painter, "Taking Black Thought Seriously," In These Times, May 15-21, 1985, p. 13.

17. Stephanie Cleverdon, "The Bakke Case: Affirmative Distraction," *Progressive,* December 1977, p. 27.

18. For a work that focuses on race and gender but notes the economic oppression imposed on women and people of color, see Stereotypes, Distortions and Omissions in US. History Textbooks (New York: Council on Interracial Books for Children, Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, 1977).

19. See the various anti-Semitic publications put out by the Nation of Islam, including the notorious The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews. It should be noted that anti-Semitism is not a problem pecuhar to African Americans. Of the 374 hate groups that have propagated anti-Semitism or engaged in anti-Semitic acts not one is African American. Still, the Nation of Islam and a few independent Black "scholars" do their share. The theory that explains all of racism and imperialism as an outgrowth of fears about genetic obliteration is spun by the African-American psychiatrist Frances Welsing. For critical statements by African-American writers regarding anti-Semitic and Afrocentric obscurantism, see Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Black Demagogues and Pseudo-Scholars," *New York Times,* July 20, 1992;

and Earl Ofari Hutchinson, "Some Afro-centrists Play Into Enemy Hands," Guardian, May 6, 1992.

20. W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (Greenwich, CT Fawcett Publications, 1953, originally published in 1903), p. xiy.

21. George Breitman (ed.), Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements (New York: Grove Press, 1964) p. 69; Archie Epps (ed.). The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard (New York: William Morrow, 1968); and interview of Malcolm X in Young Socialist, March-April 1965.

22. Karl Evanzz, The Judas Factor, The Plot to Kill Malcolm X (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 1992) offers a wealth of evidence suggesting that Malcom X was killed by state authorities and not by private individuals acting on their own. See also George Breitman, Herman.'Porter, and Baxter Smith, The Assassination of Malcom X (New York: Pathfinder, 1976).

23. David Garrow, Bearing the Cross (New York: William Morrow, 1986), p. 552; and James Melvin Washington (ed.), A Testament of Hope, The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), pp. 627-632. On King's assassination, see John Edginton and John Sergeant, "The Murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.," CovertAction, summer 1990, pp. 21-27; and Mark Lane and Dick Gregory, Code Name "Zorro," The Murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Pocket Books, 1977).

24. Robert Coles, Privileged Ones (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), pp. x-xi, 36-39

25. As quoted in *Progressive,* December 1988, p. 39.

26. Dr. Michael Levin quoted in *New York Times*, April 20, 1990.

27. A U.S. Labor Department report noted that nine Fortune 500 companies were guilty of employment and promotion practices that discriminated against minorities and women: *Washington Post*, August 9, 1991; see also Lawrence Mosqueda, Philip Meranto, Dennis Judd, Matthew Lippman, "The Persistence of Institutional Racism in Higher Education: Its Roots and

Remedies," paper presented at the American Political Science Association Meeting, New York, 1981; and Jerry Knight, "Race Factor in Mortgage Lending Seen," *Washington Post*, October 22, 1991.

28. Toni Martin, "What Color Is Medicine?" Express, November 20, 1992, pp. 10-11.

29. In housing, for instance, two-thirds of urban renewal evictions were of African Americans and Latinos, and few units were replaced. In addition, there are substantial government subsidies for White suburbanization and key infrastructures—until they become predominantly Black: Micaela di Leonardo, "Boys on the Hood," *Nation*, August 17/24, 1992, p. 180.

30. William Kunstler, "Reconstruction's Second Demise," CovertAction, Spring 1991, p. 21.

31. For a typically fulsome example of the White liberal blaming and lecturing the victim, see Pete Hamill, "Breaking the Silence, A Letter to a Black Friend," Esquire, March 1988, pp. 91-102.

32. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963), p. 53. In the second edition of their book (1970), Glazer offered a labored explanation for that statement and modified the text slightly.

33. Oscar Handlin, Boston's Immigrants (New York: Atheneum, 1977, first published 1941), p. 133; and Don Quinn Kelley, "What Price Freedom in America?" Monthly Review, November 1982, p. 26.

34. Lionel McPherson, "Black Conservatives in the Media," Extra!, December 1992, pp. 15-17; also Edward Herman, "The 'Best Man,'" *Z Magazine*, October 1991, p. 9.

35. A college guide put out by a right-wing publication, intended to direct people to conservative colleges and universities, notes about one school that "three of the eight professors hired for the 1990-91 year are African-Americans," evidence that the school is "willing to sacrifice academic

quality for diversity": Charles Sykes and Brad Miner (eds.), The National Review College Guide (Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1991).

Chapter 11 The Victimization of Women

1 . Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: Morrow, 1970), p. 9. The literature on women is vast. Citations are intended to be representative rather than exhaustive.

2. Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 3, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970, first published in 1884); Elizabeth Fisher, Woman's Creation (Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1979).

3. Aristotle, The Politics (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1986), Book I, Chapter Five.

4. Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31, 1776; John Adams to Abigail Adams, April 14, 1776, in L. H. Butterfield, Marc Friedlander, and Mary-Jo Kline (eds.). The Book of Abigail and John, Selected Letters of the Adams Family, 1762-1784 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 120-123.

5. Aileen Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 18-20.

6. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, pp. 20-39. Male "experts" have often couched woman's oppression as of benefit to her: Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978).

7. Juliet Mitchell, Women's Estate (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. 163.

8. Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, January 29, 1787: J. P. Boyd (ed.). The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 86-87.

9. Andre Maurois, Lelia, The Life of George Sand (New York: Penguin, 1977, originally published 1953), p. 549. Referring passingly to the mass executions of the revolutionaries. Sand was concerned that the wrong people might be shot: "There have been a number of summary shootings. A great many innocent, or only half-guilty, persons are going to pay with their lives for the genuinely guilty, who will get off scot-free." Referring to Victor Hugo, who supported the communards, she writes, "Hugo seems really to have a screw loose. He has published a deal of wild nonsense": ibid., p. 550.

10. Meredith Tax, *The Rising of the Women,* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), p. 189.

11. Joseph Lash, Helen and Teacher (New York: Delacorte Press, Seymour Lawrence, 1980).

12. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, p. 4; Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, Witches, Mid wives, and Nurses (Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1973).

13. Mary McKenney, "Class Attitudes and Professionalism," Quest, 3, Spring 1977, p. 54.

14. As one working-class female puts it: "I don't want to do the dirty, shitty job that [my husband] does. I'd rather stay here at home and have to struggle to make ends meet [and] take care of the kids": quoted in Bev Fisher, "Race and Class: Beyond Personal Politics," Quest, 3, Spring 1977, p. 10. On the class and racial Hmitations of the women's movement, see Angela Davis, Women, Race & Class (New York, Random House, 1981); bell hooks, Feminist Theory, From Margin to Center (Boston: South End Press, 1984).

15. The study by Doris McLaughlin, reported in Time, May 6, 1974, p. 81. On statistics regarding minority employment as domestics, see 1975 Handbook of Women Workers, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, Bulletin 297, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), p. 106. In 1993, President Clinton's first nominee for U.S. Attorney General, Zoe Baird, was revealed to have hired

illegal aliens as domestics and paid them below minimum wages and no benefits. She withdrew her name from nomination: *New York Times*, January 19, 1993.

16. *New York Times*, February 15, 1990.

17. On the struggles of wcjrking women, see Domitila Barrios de Chungara (with Moema Viezzer), Let Me Speak! Testimony of Domitila, a Woman of the Bolivian Mines (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978); Heleieth Saffioti, Women in Class Society (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978); Rosalyn Boxandall, Linda Gordon, Susan Reveryby (eds.), America's Working Women (New York: Random House, 1976); Nancy Seifer, Nobody Speaks for Me! (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976); Haleh Afshar (ed.). Women, Work, and Ideology in the Third World {hondon: Tavistock Publications, 1985). On the struggles of women against sexism in the labor movement, see Tax, The Rising of the Women.

18. Davis, Women, Race & Class; Gloria Hull {ed.),And Some of Us A re Brave (New York: Feminist Press, 1982); Cherrie Moraga (ed.). This Bridge Called Our Backs, Writings by Radical Women of Color (Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1981). On premature deaths, see Seattle Post-Intelligencer, November 28, 1992.

19. John Andrews and W. D. P. Bliss, History of Women in Trade Unions, vol. 10, Bureau of Labor, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1911), cited in Tax, *The Rising of the Women*, p. 92.

20. *Washington Post*, June 27, 1988. Education is no guarantee of equality. Japanese women are among the most educated females in the world, yet their primary role remains that of housewife and mother. Their husbands often address them as gusai ("dumb wife"), and the term "woman's wisdom" means shallow thinking. Making up 40 percent of Japan's work force, women are mostly in the lower-paid, dead-end jobs. Generally they earn half of what men make. Margaret Shapiro, "In Japan, the Son Still Rises," *Washington Post*, February 10, 1988.

21. Bahman Azad, "Iranian Women's Continuing Struggle," People's Weekly World, April 4, 1992.

22. *Washington Post*, December 15, 1991. More extreme examples of the mistreatment of women around the world are in the last section of this chapter,

23. *Washington Post*, June 27, 1988.

24. Mary Merva and Richard Fowles, Effect of Diminished Economic Opportunity on Social Stress (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 1992).

25. For instance, Catharine MacKinnon, "From Practice to Theory, or What is a White Woman Anyway," Yale Journal of Law and Feminism, 4, Fall 1991, p. 19.

26. *Washington Post*, January 18, 1990 and April 17, 1991; Seattle Post-Intelligencer, November 28, 1992; also the study by the American Council on Education, April 1989 on African-American college attendance.

27. Lenore Weitzman, *The Divorce Revolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1985).

28. Report by the Children's Defense Fund, summarized in Oakland Tribune, December 18, 1992.

29. Victor Wallis, "Marxism and the U.S. Left: Thoughts for the 1990s," Monthly Review, June 1991, pp. 9-10.

30. Wallis, "Marxism and the U.S. Left," p. 11.

31. For one example of this kind of analysis, among many, see Maria Mies, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale (London: Zed Press, 1986).

32. See publications like National Review and Commentary, and Nicholas Davidson, The Failure of Feminism (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988); Midge Dector and Steven Goldberg, The Inevitability of Patriarchy (New York: Morrow, 1973); also Nat Hentoff, Free Speech for Me But Not for Thee (New York: HarperCollins, 1992). Hentoff has pretenses of being a liberal but in practice his favorite targets are liberals, gays, people of color,

and feminists. He has almost nothing critical to say about the more powerfully directed and better financed right-wing attacks against left political dissent.

33. For instance, see Michele McKeegan, Abortion Politics (New York: Free Press, 1992). The Reagan administration cut back the hiring of women and minorities, reduced the number of women holding federal construction jobs, and ruled that firms could not be held responsible for sexual harassment: Guardian, January 14, 1981.

34. For instance, see the cover story on Diane Sawyer in Vanity Fair, September 1987; also Susan J. Douglas, "Blond Ambition," In These Times, October 28-November 3, 1987, pp. 12-13.

35. Joyce Stoller's review of The Famine Within, a documentary on the female obsession with weight, Guardian, June 3, 1992, p. 19, and the film itself; also Susan Faludi, Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women (New York: Crown, 1991); Naomi Wolf, The Beauty Myth (New York: Morrow, 1991).

36. On females in communist countries, see Sonia Kruks, Rayna Rapp, and Marilyn Young (eds.). Promissory Notes: Women in the Transition to Socialism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989).

37. Andrew Kopkind, "From Russia with Love and Squalor," *Nation,* January 18, 1993, p. 55.

38. Tamara Jones, "Walls for Women in Germany," *Los Angeles Times,* August 6, 1991.

39. Jones, "Walls for Women ..."

40. *Los Angeles Times,* November 9, 1989 and August 11, 1991; *Washington Post*, May 14, 1990 and June 3, 1990; Manchester Guardian Weekly, May 31, 1992

41. Gannett Westchester Newspapers, November 6, 1989.

42. Lori Heise, "When Women Are Prey," *Washington Post*, December 8,1991.

43. Heise, "When Women Are Prey."

44. Heise, "When Women Are Prey." In Afghanistan, a mujahedeen, who took up arms against the female-equality laws passed by the erstwhile communist government, had his rifle stolen by another family. He retaliated by kidnapping and raping the wife of one of the thieves, declaring, "Honor is restored." He was arrested, then freed when he bought the thief a new wife. The old wife, now of no value, was arrested for trying to flee to Pakistan: Dr. Chris Blatchley, "Dispatch from Afghanistan," Intervention, Winter 1985, p. 22. With the overthrow of the revolutionary government in Kabul, the strictures against women have grown more oppressive—as they have in a number of Islamic countries: *Washington Post*, February 13, 1988. On retrogressive developments in Sudan, see Guardian, July 1, 1992.

45. *Nation*, April 27, 1992, p. 547.

46. *Washington Post*, December 15, 1991.

47. Cleveland Plain Dealer, July 14, 1992.

48. Nawal El-Saadawi, The Hidden Face of Eve (London: Zed Press, 1980); "Woman Flees Genital Mutilation," Off Our Backs, February 1992, p. 16; Fran Hosken, "Female Genital Mutilation," Truth Seeker, July/August 1989, pp. 22-28.

49. Margaret Bhatty, "A Burning Question," American Atheist, January 1988, pp. 33-34, and Dr. Bhatty's reports in earlier issues of that same publication; also, "Striking Back Against Dowry Murders," New International, January 1992, p. 5.

50. Kathleen Barry, Female Sexual Slavery (New York: New York University Press, 1979).

51. *New York Times*, November 5, 1991; Boston Globe, February 9, 1992. The disappearance of females is discernible when census data is markedly

out of Hne with normal gender birthrates.

52. "Rape In America," prepared by Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Medical University of South Carolina and National Victim Center, Arlington VA, April 23, 1992. This report drew from the FBI Uniform Crime Report, 1990; U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1990; and the National Women's Study, 1990. Another compilatit)n is Violence Against Women, prepared by Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, Washington DC, July 1992; see also *New York Times*, April 24, 1992.

53. Sandra Butler, Conspiracy of Silence, The Trauma of Incest (Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 1985); Judith Herman, Father-Daughter Incest (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Tim King and Petr Kotz, "Rural Rape," *Z Magazine*, September 1992, pp. 45-46; *Washington Post*, December 8, 1991.

54. Barry, Female Sexual Slavery, pp. 86-120.

55. Violence Against Women, a report prepared by the majority staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Washington, DC, October 1992. Ann Jones, Women Who Kill (New York: Fawcett, 1980). Newsletters (December 1992) from Clearinghouse on Femicide, Berkeley, CA; Jane Caputi and Diana Russell, "'Femicide': Speaking the Unspeakable," MS, September/October 1990, pp. 34-37.

56. Violence Against Women, July 1992; Women's Political Action Committee, Women's Voting Guide (Berkeley, CA: Earthworks Press, 1992). Maria Roy, The Abusive Partner (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1982); Del Martin, Battered Wives (New York: Pocket Books, 1981); Richard Gelles and Murray Straus, Intimate Violence (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988); Linda Gordon, Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960 (New York: Viking-Penguin Press, 1988).

57. William Petrocelli and Barbara Kate Repa, Sexual Harassment on the Job (Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 1992).

58. Michael Kimmel and Thomas Mosmiller (eds.). Against the Tide: "Pro-Feminist Men" in the United States, 1776-1990 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

Chapter 12 Conspiracy and Intent

1. For instance, J. G. Merquior asserts that "class interest is seldom a conscious matter," thus we can discount "those conspiratorial accounts of social dynamics" produced by "vulgar Marxists"; see his The Veil and the Mask, Essays on Culture and Ideology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 14, 23.

2. Roy Basler (ed.), /I braham Lincoln, His Speeches and Writings (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1962), p. 66.

3. Maintaining class rule is not the only function of the state; there are also concerns for public safety and maintaining the public infrastructure.

4. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* edited by Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 212.

5. William Appleman Williams, "American Intervention in Russia: 1917-1920," in David Horowitz (ed.). Containment and Revolution (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 31. For a somewhat similar description of present-day elites, see Richard Barnet, Roots of War (New York: Atheneum, 1972).

6. Rick Baum, "A Push Toward the Final Solution," unpublished monograph, Amherst, MA, c. 1976.

7. Reagan actively thwarted enforcement procedures against companies that used pesticides and herbicides on crops and antibiotics in livestock—despite growing evidence that such additives were having a harmful effect on consumers by creating drug-resistent bacteria in meat and fruit. Reagan's view was that such government regulations placed an unnecessary burden on business. Was the president uninformed or perhaps sincerely convinced that these chemicals were harmless? Whatever the case, it should be noted that he got his meat (at taxpayer's expense) from a special farm in the

Southwest where animals were specially raised on organic feed and free of chemical additives. Regarding his own health, the "stupid" president knew how to make an informed choice: "What's Good for Reagan ..." Daily World, September 21, 1984.

8. *Washington Post*, January 6, 1979.

9. A biographer of King's, David Garrow, as quoted in the *Washington Post*, Decembers, 1991.

10. Philip Melanson, The Martin Luther King Assassination (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1991); Mark Lane and Dick Gregory, Code Name "Zorro": The Murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Pocket Books, 1977).

11. *Washington Post*, January 29, 1988; July 18 and 27, 1989.

12. Both quotations are from Leonard Silk and David Vogel, Ethics and Profits: The Crisis of Confidence in American Business (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976), pp. 44-72; Dan Clawson and Mary Ann Clawson, "Reagan or Business? Foundations of the New Conservatism," in Michael Schwartz (ed.). The Structure of Power in America (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987), pp. 202-204; Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, The New Class War (New York: Pantheon, 1982).

13. Clawson and Clawson, "Reagan or Business?" pp. 204-217.

14. Through most of the Reagan years the business community waged an active public-relations campaign for their class agenda. In a Sunday edition of the *New York Times*, June 23, 1985, four hundred of the nation's top financial and industrial magnates and six former secretaries of the Treasury Department ran a full two-page advertisement calling upon Congress to implement their conservative agenda—most of which indeed was implemented during the Reagan years.

15. Policies can originate from groups other than in elite circles benefiting the privileged stratum without its members having to take a direct part in them. Politico-economic elites may even oppose certain programs, only to

discover later that they can reap unintended benefits from them. Thus, Social Security, supposedly designed as a national retirement fund for working people and once fervently denounced by corporate interests, is now regularly raided to pay for items in the general budget, including business subsidies and military spending. It is a regressive tax that is uncomplainingly paid by a working public that thinks the fund is going to pay for future retirement when, in fact, it is used to ease present budget deficits. So conservatives seldom denounce Social Security the way they used to.

16. *New York Times*, December 15, 1973.

17. Perhaps Moyers was referring to the argument that tax cuts for business would result in trickle-down benefits for everyone.

18. *New York Times,* December 6, 1991.

19. As of 1993, the U.S. government was still giving military aid to the Indonesian invaders.

20. *Washington Post*, March 6, 1984.

21. For a more developed discussion of this, see Michael Parenti, The Sword and the Dollar, Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race {New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

22. Lundy Bancroft, "Male Violence and Imperialism," War Research Info Service, September 1992, pp. 23-24.

23. Bancroft, "Male Violence and Imperialism," pp. 23-24.

24. Ben Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, 3rd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), p. 211.

25. For instance, Sam Donaldson's comments during an interview with Nica-raguan representative Alejandro Bendana on "Nightline," August 4, 1987.

26. Wayne Smith, "Lies About Nicaragua," Foreign Affairs, 67, Summer 1987, pp. 87-103.

27. *New York Times*, August 6, 1987.

28. Quoted in Greenpeace, November/December 1990, p. 4.

29. ABC-TV evening news, November 9, 1984; *Washington Post*, November 11, 1984.

30. Richard Maltby, "Made for Each Other: The Melodrama of Hollywood and the House Committee on Un-American Activities," in Philip Davies and Brian Neve (eds.), Cinema, Politics and Society in America (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), pp. 77, 80.

31. Todd Gitlin, Inside Prime (New York: Pantheon, 1983), p. 12.

32. On the political conservatism of network bosses, see Les Brown, Television, The Business behind the Box (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971) and Ben Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, 3rd ed.

33. Todd Gitlin, "When the Right Talks, TV Listens," *Nation*, October 15, 1983, p. 335.

34. *New York Times*, November 27, 1988; see the discussion on ideological control of the entertainment media in Michael Parenti, *Make-Believe Media, The Politics of Entertainment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 184-195 and passim.

35. Pat Robertson, *The New World Order* (Wslco, TX: Word Publishing, 1991), p. 37.

36. Jay Kinney, "The Disharmonic Convergence," Critique reprint, 1988, p. 6.

37. See, for instance, the analysis by Chip Berlet, "Right Woos Left," published by Political Research Associates, Washington DC, August 1991; also articles by Noam Chomsky and Michael Albert in *Z Magazine*, August and October 1992; and my response in *Z Magazine*, January 1993.

38. Alexander Cockburn in the *Nation*, March 9, 1992.

39. Edward Alsworth Ross, *Sin and Society* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1907).

Michael Parenti is a major voice among political progressives. He received his Ph.D. from Yale in 1962 and has taught social science and political science at a number of colleges and universities. Most recently he held guest professorships at Howard University, the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, and California State University, Northridge. He is the author of *Democracy for the Few* (fifth edition); *Power and the Powerless; The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race; Make-Believe Media: The Politics of Entertainment;* and *Inventing Reality: The Politics of News Media* (second edition)—all published by St. Martin's Press. Parenti regularly appears on radio and television programs and lectures frequently at college campuses around the country. He lives in Berkeley, California.

Anita Newby

ISBN 0-312-09497-3

90000>

9 780312 094973

This book made available by the Internet Archive.